EDELFRIDA,

A

NOVEL.

VOL I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. HOOKHAM, AND J. CARPENTER,
OLD AND NEW BOND-STREET.

M.DCC.XCII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

MISS M——.

IN preſenting to you the follow-pages, I diſclaim all intention of a formal Dedication. I am aſſured you will accept them as a token of friendſhip; and though by no means confident of their merit, I am entirely ſo of your partiality.

I am anxious that they ſhould be read in general with approbation; but I am much more anxious, that you, whom I eſteem, ſhould receive ſome entertainment from them.

Whether

Whether it is juſt or reaſonable to hope for this gratification, I muſt leave others to determine; no Reader can, however, be offended at a wiſh to pleaſe, whether a ſucceſsful one or not, you, I am convinced will not fail to do more than juſtice to the production of

Your faithful and obliged friend,

THE AUTHOR.

EDELFRIDA.

CHAPTER I.

"PASS but a few ſhort days, and I "ſhall be numbered with the "dead; my Edelfrida will be an or-"phan, a friendleſs unprotected or-"phan!" Thus exclaimed Mr. Dudley, as he ſat in his elbow chair, ſupported by pillows, in the laſt ſtage of a painful decline; he pauſed, and raiſing his hands and eyes towards heaven, ſighed deeply; he had hitherto borne a tedious illneſs with patience and reſignation, and he now checked the infirmity of his nature, which was tempting him to murmur againſt the Almighty Power, whoſe wiſdom had ordained the trial, and on whoſe mercy and juſtice it was

his intereſt and his duty humbly to rely.

"In the anguiſh of my heart," reſumed he, "I dared to queſtion the de-
"crees of Providence, and deemed
"my child unprotected, becauſe this
"frail being is almoſt at its cloſe;
"ſhall I not remember the all-ſeeing
"eye of my Creator, and with confi-
"dence truſt my Edelfrida to his pow-
"erful guardianſhip?" Weak as he was he now ſunk on his knees, and imploring pardon for the involuntary offence, he fervently recommended this only object of his earthly care, to the Divine Protection.

In this poſture Edelfrida, who had left him but for a few minutes, returned and found him; ſhe flew to raiſe him, with anxious tenderneſs fearing he had accidentally fallen from his ſeat in her abſence, through a want of ſtrength to ſupport himſelf.—"I was recommend-
"ing my child to the care of Heaven,"

ſaid

ſaid he; "for it is vain to flatter your "hopes, Edelfrida: I ſhall quickly be "called away; and where can we ſo "well or ſo ſecurely reſt our expecta-"tions for future peace and ſafety, as on "the good God, whoſe mercy extends "to all his creatures, and to whom I "owe that comfort which the world "could not deſtroy. Under my paſt "afflictions, though poor, deſerted, "and ill treated by thoſe who ſhould "have ſuſtained and ſoothed me, while "the bitterneſs of ſorrow wrung my "heart, the God whom I ſought never "left me the prey of deſpair: and in "theſe moments of bodily pain and "ſickneſs, while I hover on the brink "of the grave, I bleſs his Name, and "bow beneath his correcting hand, in "the joyful expectation of ſharing his "favour — You weep, my Edelfrida: "alas! my child, this is a vale of tears "through which we muſt paſs to a bet-"ter world; let not, then, the ſpe-

" cious pleaſures, but real evils of life,
" tempt you to forget your Creator;
" remember him while yet your ſoul is
" untainted by vice; praiſe him in the
" days of thy youth and proſperity,
" and he will remember thee in the
" hours of painful adverſity, which it
" may be thy lot to endure.

" Had it been permitted, I would
" gladly have ſtaid with my child a few
" years longer, to have directed her
" ſteps in the paths of truth and virtue;
" but, Edelfrida, be aſſured it is not
" neceſſary, ſince it is not allowed.—
" To render you happy has been my
" chief buſineſs in life, next to the im-
" portant duty we all owe to our Hea-
" venly Father, to ſecure to you a por-
" tion of felicity here on earth; I was
" convinced it was moſt requiſite to
" render you worthy of it firſt: my la-
" bour, I hope, has not been ineffec-
" tual. Nature has been very bounti-
" ful to you; ſhe has endowed you with

" a good

" a good underſtanding and good pro-
" penſities; remember, however, that
" human wiſdom, in its higheſt ſtate of
" perfection, is altogether folly in the
" eye of an infinitely wiſe God; and
" let me arm my beloved child againſt
" relying on the ſtrength of her own
" virtues; your honeſt heart I truſt is
" good, but it has yet met no trial;
" your ſenſibility is keen, ſuffer it not
" to conquer the ſober height of reaſon;
" for innumerable are the evils which
" ſpring from an improper indulgence of
" theſe acute feelings; theſe admonitions,
" my child, are the beſt legacy I have
" to bequeath you; the little pittance
" which remains, and which I have
" been careful to preſerve out of the
" wreck of better fortune, is not ſuffi-
" cient of itſelf to preſerve you from
" many wants; it may, however, with
" prudence, be a friend to you, ſhould
" unkindneſs drive you from the roof of
" affluence; from your uncle's, I mean;

" for surely he will in my grave bury
" his unjuſt reſentments, and receive
" his orphan niece into his protection.
" I have written to him, and given my
" letter to our good friend, Mr. Marr,
" who will forward it to England with my
" remains. When he finds that his in-
" jured brother is no more, his heart
" may relent, and he will, I hope, take
" you to his boſom, and cheriſh you,
" for the ſake of our former friend-
" ſhip."

Edelfrida had in ſilent ſorrow attended thus far to her father's inſtructions, but here ſhe interrupted him, by ſuddenly falling on her knees before him, and thus in broken accents addreſſing him:

" Oh! my father, my friend, my
" protector! if, indeed, I muſt loſe you,
" condemn me not, I conjure you, to
" receive from the proud heart of my
" uncle, that ſupport your death will de-
" prive me of; rather let me ſink at

" once

"once into the obſcurity I prefer
"a thouſand times, to a depend-
"ence on thoſe unfeeling relations,
"who have purſued you to poverty
"and the grave. My ſoul revolts
"againſt them; and I would rather
"ſeek a precarious ſubſiſtence from
"the charity of ſtrangers, than ſubmit
"to accept a benefit from their hands;
"have they not deſtroyed my father!"
continued ſhe in an agony of grief.

"Riſe, my Edelfrida," cried Mr. Dudley, much agitated, "riſe, and "liſten to me." She obeyed.

"'Tis true," ſaid he, "Sir Edward
"Dudley has ſuffered himſelf to be
"hurried by paſſion and prejudice, into
"actions which have greatly inter-
"rupted my peace of mind, as well as
"greatly injured me in my fortune;
"but God is my witneſs that I forgive
"him, without reſerve, ſincerely I for-
"give him; and have I devoted myſelf
"to the cultivation of your mind: from

" the earlieſt infancy have I watched
" each dawning virtue, to warm it into
" being have I carefully checked each
" error while yet it might be checked
" with gentleneſs and reaſon, at length
" to be diſappointed in my hope of
" ſeeing you, though not perfect, at
" leaſt free from thoſe dark ſhades
" which deform our nature, paſſion and
" revenge; do they maintain an em-
" pire in your heart? and would you
" caſt yourſelf unknowing and un-
" known upon the world, to gratify any
" potent reſentment which it is criminal
" to have felt? Ah, my child!" con-
tinued he, " baniſh theſe unworthy
" feelings from your mind, and riſe ſu-
" perior to them; I here expect your
" promiſe, that if my brother and Lady
" Dudley conſent to receive you as their
" niece, you will not reject their of-
" fered protection; your uncle has his
" virtues; and if for a time they were ob-
" ſcured, he may yet merit your duty

" and

" and affection next to God. To whoſe
" care can I ſo properly commit you
" as to Sir Edward Dudley's? and
" ſhould you not find that tender ſo-
" licitude for your happineſs, that anxi-
" ous deſire to guard you from ſorrow
" with which I have cheriſhed you,
" you will yet find ſafety from the
" thouſand dangers and difficulties
" which ſurround one of your ſex and
" age, in the world, without a protec-
" tor. The vanity inherent in our na-
" ture has, ere this, whiſpered my
" Edelfrida, that ſhe is lovely; with
" a ſigh I have obſerved a brighter luſ-
" tre in your eye, a warmer glow upon
" your cheek, when admiration courted
" your attention. I ſighed, my beloved
" child, becauſe I foreſaw that your
" beauty might be the cauſe of much
" miſery to you, when the hand of your
" father was no longer to guide you
" through the maze of folly and falſe-
" hood in which the vain and thought-

" leſs too frequently loſe themſelves.
" Should your uncle be deſtitute of ten-
" derneſs for you, which I truſt he will
" not, yet his pride will prompt him to
" ſupport you through life with credit
" and ſafety; for ſhould you fall, he
" muſt ſhare in your diſgrace. The
" name of Dudley is dear to him; will
" he not then carefully preſerve it from
" diſhonour in your perſon? and thus
" good may ſpring from the root of evil.
" Promiſe me then, Edelfrida, to ſeek
" an aſylum only with him, for, added
" to the motives I have already urged,
" I have ſtill another:—by committing
" my darling child to his protection, I
" convince him that I die in charity
" with him and Lady Dudley."

" I do promiſe my dear father," ſaid Edelfrida, " firmly, whatever my re-
" pugnance may be, to become an in-
" mate in my uncle's houſe; I will ſa-
" crifice my own feelings, and faithful-
" ly obey your injunction."

Mr.

Mr. Dudley preſſed his daughter to his breaſt and bleſſed her. "But my "father," added ſhe, "allow me to "hope, that ſhould Sir Edward and "Lady Dudley diſappoint your ex-"pectations, by treating me with pride, "unkindneſs, and inſult, that I may "then be abſolved from my promiſe, "and be permitted to ſeek for myſelf "another aſylum."

"Did I not tell my Edelfrida," replied he, mildly, "that the little for-"tune ſhe will poſſeſs, may ſerve her "in the hour of need, and enable her to "direct her ſteps from the habitation of "unfeeling pride to ſome ſafe retreat? I "do not wiſh you to live the ſlave of "your relations; only be ſteady in vir-"tue, and Heaven will not fail you."

"Your precepts, my father, ſhall "ever be engraven on my heart," replied Edelfrida; "they ſhall direct all "my actions."

Mr. Dudley kiſſed his beloved child,

and, exhauſted by the converſation, ſunk into a quiet ſlumber for ſome hours.—Meanwhile Edelfrida reflected on what he had ſaid, with a pious reſolution to fulfil his wiſhes to the utmoſt of her power; but her heart was ſick with apprehenſion of the evil which was haſtily approaching her—the death of an affectionate and tender parent.

CHAPTER II.

THE hour now arrived which was to rob Edelfrida of her only parent. She gazed in ſilent anguiſh on the emaciated form of her dying father; ſhe hung over him in deſpair, trembling leſt the next moment ſhould leave him lifeleſs in her arms. He was now too weak to utter more than a word at a time; but his pious ſoul ceaſed not to bleſs his Maker, while it yet lingered in its frail body. At length he fixed his cloſing eyes on Edelfrida; with the benignant ſmile of Heaven, he ſighed and expired. Still ſhe was immovable; ſhe ſcarcely breathed, as fearful of diſturbing him, till a groan from an old and faithful ſervant, who was in the room, awakened her; ſhe ſaw he was no more; ſhe faintly ſhrieked, and ſunk ſenſeleſs on the body. During this ſuſpenſion of life,

Edelfrida

Edelfrida was conveyed to her own room, where means were uſed for her recovery. At length ſhe opened her eyes, and ſighed forth, "Oh! my "father;" then cloſed them, and continued in a ſtupor for ſome hours, from which it was not poſſible to rouſe her. She retained juſt ſenſe enough to feel that ſhe was wretched, though ſhe had no diſtinct idea of her forlorn condition.

Nice, to which place ſhe had attended her father in ſearch of health, was the ſcene of this her firſt affliction; and here ſhe had reſided long enough to make an intimacy, which now opened to her the only proſpect of comfort in her preſent diſtreſs. Mr. Marr, the gentleman of whom Mr. Dudley had ſpoken, together with his wife and daughters, inſtantly obeyed a ſummons from Edelfrida's only attendant, who ſupplicated them

them to conſole and ſupport her young lady on this trying occaſion.

They came; and Edelfrida, ſoothed by their kindneſs, ſhed tears, to the great relief of an heart overcharged with a weight of ſorrow. They encouraged her to weep, and patiently waited till her grief ſhould ſpend its firſt violence, ere they offered her comfort. While the females of this amiable family were thus humanely attentive to the beauteous mourner, Mr. Marr carefully fulfilled the laſt injunction of the deceaſed Mr. Dudley, whoſe body was put on board a ſhip, which was to convey it to England; the letter to Sir Edward Dudley was alſo ſent; and Edelfrida removed to the houſe of her friends, to wait an anſwer from her uncle; an anſwer which was in a great meaſure to determine her fate in life.—The promiſe ſhe had given to her father ſhe held ſacred: yet ſhe ſecretly wiſhed Sir Edward might refuſe to receive her.

Edelfrida

—Edelfrida had many virtues; but ſhe was not without her ſhare in the imperfections of human nature: there was a warmth and vivacity in her temper, which frequently tempted her to the verge of impropriety; nay, had it not been for the watchful eye of her father, ſhe had, like many a giddy girl, fond of admiration, ſhared the cenſure which falls heavily on youthful folly, nor allows for inexperience, but at once deems the heart corrupt, becauſe the manners are tinctured with that thoughtleſs levity which is often only the offſpring of great animal ſpirits, or the magic voice of flattery, by which the ear of beauty is ever aſſailed.

Edelfrida was now but juſt ſeventeen; poſſeſſed of that faſcinating form and face which the ſenſes are unable to reſiſt; her voice was melodious and perſuaſive; and her whole ſoul appeared on her countenance, whenever the occaſion animated her into joy, or

melted

melted her into ſympathy of ſoft compaſſion. She was grateful, affectionate, and ſincere; but romantic, proud, and reſentful; to her friends ſhe attributed every virtue, and from them ſhe was patient of reproof; but from her enemies ſhe fled with inflexible ſcorn and reſentment. Her ſoul, however, was too noble for revenge; it was only in abſence and contempt, that ſhe endeavoured to repay inſult and injury; and had not her filial piety prevailed, ſhe would have ſought an aſylum in the moſt abject obſcurity, rather than accepted protection from her uncle and Lady Dudley.

Some time elapſed ere Sir Edward replied to his brother's laſt requeſt, and made his niece acquainted with his determination reſpecting her. In this interval Edelfrida regained part of her accuſtomed cheerfulneſs. As her grief had been violent, ſo it was leſs durable; though ſhe ceaſed not to lament,

lament, and fervently remember, the virtues of the beſt of parents. Her anxiety, however, to learn her deſtiny grew at length painful; and, indignant at the neglect which appeared in her uncle's ſilence, nothing but her promiſe withheld her from reſolving againſt any connexion with her own family.—Her friends repreſented to her the prudence and neceſſity of ſuſpending her judgement: for as by her father's will Sir Edward was appointed her guardian, ſhe muſt ſubmit to his authority, ſhould he chuſe to accept the truſt.—Edelfrida wept at the idea of being ſubject to her uncle's power; and almoſt accuſed her father of cruelty in compelling her to it.—At length the long-expected letter arrived, incloſed in one to Mr. Marr. Edelfrida was ſitting with the ladies, when he entered with it in his hand. She gueſſed it was Sir Edward's reply the moment ſhe caſt her eyes upon the paper; and the blood

blood inſtantly forſook her cheeks. "Be not alarmed, my dear Miſs Dud-"ley," ſaid Mr. Marr; "your uncle's "intentions are all kindneſs towards "you; read his letter with candour, "and let your underſtanding, rather "than your feelings, judge its con-"tents." — Edelfrida bluſhed, and bowing in ſilence took the letter.

To Miss Edelfrida Dudley.

THOUGH long eſtranged from your father by an unhappy difference, I could not receive the account of his death without feeling that he had been my brother. He earneſtly recommends you to my guardianſhip; nor will I reject his dying requeſt. Haſten, then, to England; and be aſſured of finding in my family a ſafe and honorable aſylum. We ſhall all willingly contribute to your welfare and

and happineſs, ſo long as you continue to merit mine and Lady Dudley's protection. Lady Dudley kindly and generouſly conſents to forget paſt events, in order to become the friend of the orphan and the unprotected. I preſume you have with you a ſervant whoſe attendance you can command till you arrive in this country, where it will be no longer neceſſary for you to retain any domeſtic of your own; mine will be ordered to pay you the reſpect due to my niece. I find from your father's will, that your proviſion is inconſiderable: had prudence guided my poor brother's life, your fortune had been better ſuited to your birth; nevertheleſs, you may depend on being ſecured againſt the inconveniences ariſing from a very limited income, ſo long as you chuſe to conſider yourſelf one of my family.—As I expect ſoon to ſee you, I ſhall only add to my own

good

good wiſhes thoſe of Lady Dudley and my daughter, and ſubſcribe myſelf

Your ſincere friend,

EDWARD DUDLEY.

Dudley Park.

Edelfrida ſighed as ſhe cloſed the letter; then, preſenting it to Mr. Marr, ſaid, "Read, Sir, the effuſions of kind-"neſs intended to ſooth a wounded "mind; read, and confeſs, that pru-"dence and neceſſity muſt alone de-"cide on the contents of that affection-"ate epiſtle." A mixture of contempt and indignation ſat on her features as ſhe ſpoke. Mr. Marr caſt a look of compaſſionate tenderneſs on her, and took Sir Edward's letter, which when he had read, he returned it, ſaying, "My dear Miſs Dudley, let "me conjure you to call your reaſon "to your aid on this occaſion. Your "uncle means to behave kindly to "you, be aſſured; nor ſhould you

"ſpurn

"ſpurn his offered protection, or feel "offended with a ſtyle which may not "anſwer your ideas of affectionate "ſenſibility. If in eſſentials, Sir Ed- "ward proves himſelf your friend, "why quarrel with him, and render "yourſelf miſerable, becauſe he does "not expreſs himſelf in the exact "terms you would have choſen? In "ſhort, as you mean faithfully to fol- "low your father's inſtructions, you "would do wiſely to conquer theſe "too keen emotions of ſenſibility, "which ſerve only to deſtroy your "health and peace of mind."

Edelfrida wept, but acknowledged the juſtice of Mr. Marr's obſervations, and promiſed, if poſſible, to let them influence her mind and conduct. "Let "them alſo influence your reply to "your uncle," ſaid Mr. Marr, "that "he may not receive an unfavourable "impreſſion of you ere you enter "his houſe."

"'Tis

"'Tis hard," returned Edelfrida, "to conceal our contempt beneath the "guiſe of gratitude and humility; and "in that dreſs only I ſuppoſe I muſt "convey my ſentiments to Sir Ed-"ward; be aſſured, however, my good "friends," continued ſhe, "your advice "ſhall not be thrown away upon me; "you ſhall read my anſwer, and judge "of its propriety." She then began the unpleaſing taſk.

To Sir Edward Dudley.

PERMIT me, Sir, to return you and Lady Dudley my acknowledgements for the protection and kindneſs you have aſſured me of in your family, when it ſhall be my ſtudy to convince you that I am fully ſenſible of their value. I doubt not but that I ſhall find your houſe an aſylum againſt every diſtreſs; what then can I have to regret in the ſmallneſs of the proviſion allotted me?

on

on the contrary, gratitude and filial piety bid me rejoice that my dear father never wanted thoſe comforts which money could procure, and which his ill ſtate of health demanded; on this ſubject my only grief is, that he felt too much on my account. The ſervant who has lived from my birth in our family, will accompany me to England, and in obedience to your commands will quit me at your door. I expect to be in London by the twenty-third of next month, if no accident retards my journey, where I ſhall have the pleaſure of paying my perſonal duty to yourſelf and Lady Dudley, to whom I beg leave to preſent my reſpects, and alſo to Miſs Dudley.

I remain, Sir,
your dutiful and obliged
EDELFRIDA DUDLEY.

Mr. Marr, on peruſing this letter, found it more reſpectful than he had dared

dared to hope, it was therefore ſealed and diſpatched to England, in order to prepare Sir Edward for the reception of his niece. In the mean time Edelfrida's friends endeavoured to find out a proper conveyance for her back to her native country, but as no perſon of whom they had any knowledge was leaving Nice at that time, ſhe was obliged to reſolve upon travelling with her faithful domeſtic only. Mr. Marr inſiſted on ſeeing her ſafe into France. This plan ſettled, ſhe with a heavy heart began the preparations for her departure; ſhe could not quit the friends who had received her in her affliction, and treated her with more than common tenderneſs, without feeling the keeneſt ſenſations of regret; nor could ſhe think of the approaching meeting with relations ſhe could not love, without the moſt ſenſible pain. Her heart, formed for the intercourſe of affection and friendſhip, ſhrunk from all connexion with the

unfeeling pride of Sir Edward and Lady Dudley; of their daughter ſhe knew nothing; but conceived a prejudice againſt her, becauſe ſhe was their daughter.

The trouble of making her baggage ready for the journey devolved on her ſervant, and ſhe employed the few remaining hours of peace and harmony with her amiable friends, in the enjoyment of their converſation, and in yielding to them the grateful ſenſibility of a heart ſuſtained by their kindneſs. At length the morning of departure came; ſhe wept, embraced, and thanked them; then threw herſelf into the carriage; Mr. Marr and her maid followed, and they ſoon loſt ſight of Nice and its inhabitants.

CHAPTER III.

MR. Marr did all in his power to cheer the drooping ſpirits of his companion, but in vain; and they arrived at the place where he was to take his leave of her, without having induced her to throw off any part of the melancholy which oppreſſed her mind. On parting with this kind friend, Edelfrida felt as if ſhe had bade an eternal adieu to all comfort, and reſigned herſelf to deſpair. Mr. Marr ſaw her into the carriage which was to take her forward; then melted even to tears by her diſtreſs, he haſtily kiſſed her hand, bade her farewell, and the chaiſe drove on.

Edelfrida ſuffered her tears to flow without reſtraint, and her fellow traveller, who was tenderly and faithfully attached to her, bore her company in this indulgence of ſorrow—"my good

"friend," ſaid Edelfrida, taking her "hand, 'tis no ſmall part of my grief that "I muſt be ſeparated ſo ſoon from you: "thus every thing I love and eſteem is "cruelly torn from me." The good woman could only weep, and Edelfrida ſunk again into ſilence and the agonizing reflection of her condition;—unmindful of the ſcene before her, ſhe neither ſaw nor heard, ſo entirely was her mind occupied by its own unhappineſs.--She was however effectually awakened from this painful reverie, by the ſudden overturn of the carriage. She happened unluckily to be on the ſide that went down, ſo that the ſhock was violent, and with difficulty ſhe was dragged out of the ſhattered vehicle, fainting from the effects of the blow ſhe had received; the ſervant was little hurt, but greatly diſtreſſed to ſee her beloved lady pale and ſenſeleſs, while the blood flowed from a wound on the ſide of her head; her appearance magnified to the

greatly

greatly alarmed attendant, the injury Edelfrida had ſuſtained; while the poſtillion was croſſing himſelf in terror and amazement at the accident, without knowing how it was in any degree to be remedied; all he could do was to fetch a little water from a neighbouring ſpring, to ſprinkle the face of the helpleſs Edelfrida, while her maid ſat on the ground in order to ſupport her head on her knees; in the midſt of this dilemma a chaiſe drove up, to the great relief of the forlorn travellers and the terrified poſtillion; two gentlemen were ſeated in it, who ordered it with one accord inſtantly to ſtop, they opened the door themſelves, and without heſitation alighted. Edelfrida ſtill remained unconſcious of her ſituation, while the two ſtrangers gazed upon her with a mixture of ſurprize, admiration, and concern; they raiſed her from the ground, and one in particular, who appeared beyond deſcription ſtruck with her beauty, inani-

mate as it then was, ſupported her in his arms, while the wound on the ſide of her head was examined by her maid and the other gentleman, who immediately ſaw that it was only a very ſlight cut; they bound it round with a handkerchief to ſtop the blood, and while this operation was performing, ſhe once more opened her eyes, and fixed them upon a face whereon the moſt anxious tenderneſs was painted, a face wholly unknown to her, but of a moſt captivating mould—ſhe gazed for a moment in ſilent aſtoniſhment to behold herſelf thus encircled by the arms of a total ſtranger, and ſurrounded by ſeveral perſons of whom ſhe had not the leaſt knowledge, her maid excepted; at length ſhe exclaimed, "for heavens ſake where "am I!"—"In perfect ſafety, my dear "Madam, I aſſure you," replied the gentleman who held her, "ſuffering only a "trifling injury from the overthrow of "your carriage, I ſincerely hope;" "and

"for

"for that ſafety," returned Edelfrida, diſengaging herſelf from his arms, "I "preſume I am indebted to your aſſiſt-"ance, Sir." "No, Ma'am," he anſwered, bowing; "I was not ſo happy "as to arrive in time to reſcue you "from the diſagreeable, I will not "call it fatal, accident; but if you will "accept a ſeat in that carriage, I will "joyfully undertake to anſwer for your "future ſafety."

Edelfrida coloured, heſitated, and knew not what to reply; but her maid, ſeeing her undetermined, cried, "Do, "dear Madam, take the gentleman's "offer, or we ſhall be obliged to ſtay "here by ourſelves till the chaiſe can "be mended." Edelfrida ſmiled at an urgency which ſhe knew proceeded from an apprehenſion on her account; and ſeeing no alternative, ſhe ſaid, "I "know not how to treſpaſs on your "politeneſs and humanity, Sir; yet "am I too great a coward to brave

"the danger of ſtaying here." "If "you," replied he, "will permit me "to treſpaſs upon you, by making one "of the party in the carriage, there is "no further cauſe for debate." Edelfrida bowed aſſent, and ſuffered herſelf to be handed into the chaiſe, wherein the gentleman ſeated himſelf between her and her attendant.

The other ſtranger had ſcarcely ſpoken after Edelfrida's recovery, but mounting the ſervant's horſe, he preceded the carriage to the next poſt-houſe, leaving him to aſſiſt the poſtillion to drag the broken vehicle there after them.

When Edelfrida had collected her ſcattered thoughts, ſhe inquired more particularly into the nature and cauſe of the accident, which her inſenſibility had rendered her ignorant of, and again thanked the gentleman, to whoſe timely aſſiſtance ſhe owed her preſent ſituation, which was perfectly commodious. "I," ſaid

ſaid he, in return for her acknowledgments, "ſhall ever conſider it as one "of the moſt lucky adventures of my "life, and bleſs my good genius, who "conducted me to the ſpot, where my "ſervices, unimportant as they are, "were not wholly uſeleſs." "I can-"not ſtyle them unimportant," replied Edelfrida, "while I feel that they reſ-"cued me from a moſt unpleaſant and "diſtreſſing ſituation. May I aſk to "whom I am ſo greatly obliged." "My name," ſaid he ſmiling, "will "not, I fear, introduce me to you as "an acquaintance: Henry Evelyne "dares not flatter himſelf with having "any claim to that happineſs; an in-"ſignificant ſtudent at one of the Eng-"liſh univerſities, who makes a flying "viſit to the continent with his brother "only for his companion, and without "the eclat of equigage, leaves no trace "of his momentary reſidence; and, but "for the circumſtance which procured

"him his preſent felicity, would have "returned to his native country un-"knowing and unknown." At the concluſion of this ſpeech, he bowed gracefully to Edelfrida, who replied, "I have not indeed the pleaſure of "being acquainted with Mr. Evelyne; "but that proceeds rather, I am in-"clined to think, from my own in-"ſignificancy than his; my gratitude, "rather than his, is, however, certainly "due to the good fortune which intro-"duced us to each other; for I am "the ſole gainer." "I will not pre-"ſume to hope," ſaid he, with a gay but reſpectful air, "that I ſhall be "a gainer; but, at preſent, it is im-"poſſible I ſhould feel any regret for "the loſs I may ſuſtain."—Edelfrida made no anſwer to this oblique compliment.

Her fellow traveller then proceeded, —"Will you think me impertinent, "if I enquire whether my country

"may

"may not boaſt of being yours alſo;
"and whether your deſtination is
"to England?"

"I," ſaid Edelfrida ſmiling, "boaſt
"of England for my native land;
"and to re-viſit it I am now on
"my way. Perhaps you will think me
"unworthy of the diſtinction, when
"I declare that it is with regret I am
"about to return home."

"Though I confeſs myſelf partial,"
replied he, "to England, yet I ſhould
"be aſhamed of a ſentiment ſo il-
"liberal as that which would confine
"all virtue and happineſs to ſo ſmall
"a ſpace in the habitable globe; nor
"ſhould I be eaſily perſuaded while
"I gazed upon the moſt candid and
"intelligent countenance in the world,
"that the mind which gives it ani-
"mation, could be either ungrateful
"or unworthy on any occaſion. If,
"therefore, you re-viſit our native
"iſland with reluctance, I fear that

" reluctance proceeds from the painful " recollection of ſome bleſſing once " enjoyed there; the deprivation of " which may render the moſt beloved " ſpot inſupportable." He glanced a look upon Edelfrida's deep mourning as he addreſſed her. She ſighed; and a ſtarting tear proclaimed the ſenſibility this obſervation had awakened.

" I have indeed ſuſtained a loſs," ſhe replied; " which renders every place " irkſome to my feelings, and England " more particularly ſo, ſince I am now " condemned to live in it, in a ſtate of " the moſt mortifying dependence, to " which the death of a father, it was " not more my duty than my inclina- " tion to love with more than a com- " mon affection, has reduced me."

" Who is there," returned Mr. Evelyne, with a generous warmth, " that would " not be proud and happy to ſupply " the place of that protector death has " robbed you of!" " There are very

" few,"

"few," ſaid Edelfrida, ſhaking her head, "who will, I fear, take either "pride or pleaſure in performing the "office of protector to one who has no-"thing to offer in return but her grati-"tude. The only perſon upon whom "I have any claim, will perhaps con-"ſider it as a painful duty he muſt not "wholly neglect for his credit's ſake."

"May I aſk who this ſenſeleſs, un-"feeling mortal is?" cried Mr. Evelyne.

"Perhaps," replied Edelfrida, "I ought "not to name Sir Edward Dudley, after "having ſpoken in terms of no great "reſpect of his diſpoſition. Sir Edward "Dudley is my uncle, my guardian, the "brother of my father; to whoſe houſe I "am now going, and from whom I am "to expect either happineſs or miſery in "future. I know little of him, having "ſpent the laſt three years of my life "on the continent, in the vain hope of "my dear father's being reſtored to "health by the change of climate; a few

"weeks

"weeks ago that hope deſerted me," added ſhe, burſting into tears; "and "my uncle leaves me to depend on "the compaſſion of ſtrangers in a long "and melancholy journey, promiſing "me at the end of it a reception, "which he may deem kind, but which, "I fear, I ſhall think far otherwiſe."

Mr. Evelyne's countenance bore teſtimony to the intereſt he felt in his fair companion's fate.—There was an honeſt ſimplicity in her manner which ſpoke to the heart; and that of the young traveller was by no means a hard one. "Sir Edward Dudley," exclaimed he, "is unworthy of the truſt Nature has "repoſed in him, ſince he is thus "negligent of the ſafety and happi-"neſs of the moſt valuable part of his "family. I own it moves my wonder "and indignation, to think that he "ſhould, with cruelty and indifference, "expoſe one ſo nearly allied to him, "to the danger and inconvenience of

"travel-

" travelling through a foreign country
" with only a ſingle female attendant.
" Surely he muſt be ignorant of this
" circumſtance." " It was his own
" direction," replied Edelfrida, with a mortified air.

" If he could not have attended you
" himſelf, he has a ſon," ſaid Mr. Evelyne, " who ought to have been
" proud of conducting a relation who
" muſt do him honour, to the protection
" of his family. If I am to judge of
" Mr. Dudley's feelings by my own," continued he, " nothing ſhould have
" detained me from a duty which pro-
" miſed me the ſweeteſt and the pureſt
" reward; a reward which I ſhould
" have read in the eyes of my fair
" couſin, whoſe heart, I am convinced,
" does more than juſtice to thoſe ef-
" forts of friendſhip which ſpring from
" the deſire we feel to recommend
" ourſelves to whatever is ſuperior in
" excellence, as well as from that in-

" ſtructive

"ſtructive inclination which prompts
"us to guard and protect a ſex whoſe
"native timidity and apprehenſive deli-
"cacy make them ſhrink at the appear-
"ance of danger and difficulty, which
"it was never intended they ſhould
"encounter alone and unſupported."

"Such," replied Edelfrida ſmiling,
"is the language of the laſt century.
"Mr. Dudley is a man of faſhion, I
"preſume; conſequently, too much
"diſtinguiſhed by that toniſh indiffer-
"ence which forbids Nature and
"Friendſhip to exert their claims. It
"would have been highly unreaſonable
"to expect from him ſuch a ſacrifice
"to an inſignificant couſin, whoſe
"exiſtence is ſcarcely known to him;
"it would, no doubt, have ſubjected
"him to the ridicule of companions,
"whoſe approbation he is much more
"ſolicitous to ſecure, than the compara-
"tively ſilent, and unimportant plaudit
"of a few who, like yourſelf, are above

"the

"the control of fashion.—But, resumed she, "I may injure Mr. Dudley; it is "more than probable, he knows no-"thing of either me or my mode of "travelling; and if he does, he may "not be sufficiently master of his own "time and actions, to bestow them on "a dependent relation, contrary to the "will of his family. I do not wish to "censure, where there is a possibility "of bestowing praise with truth and "justice."

"How valuable is the praise accorded "from so pure a source," replied Mr. Evelyne. "Who would not study to "deserve it!" "How few would "condescend to accept it," said Edelfrida: "The gift receives its value "from the giver, in general; how low "then in estimation must that be which "proceeds from the most undistin-"guished object in the creation." "Pardon me," cried Mr. Evelyne; "I "must not suffer you to be guilty of

"such

"ſuch injuſtice to Nature." "Nature "indeed appears to merit your grati- "tude," replied Edelfrida.

"She ſhall always have my moſt en- "thuſiaſtic praiſe," ſaid he, "when- "ever, as now, I am fortunate enough "to contemplate one of her faireſt "productions."

Edelfrida, affecting not to underſtand this compliment, ſaid, "In the courſe "of a journey through this country, "you will have leiſure and opportunity "to pay due homage to her various "beauties, for here ſhe has been moſt "laviſh." "I adore her in all her "works," returned he, bowing; "but "moſt in thoſe which ſhe has animated "with reaſon and ſenſibility."

Edelfrida now looked forward and ſaw the poſt-houſe, at which ſhe was to part with a companion who had engaged her gratitude and ſecured her eſteem. There was ſomething in his air, his manners, his voice, his converſa-

tion,

tion, and his ſentiments, ſo conſonant to her feelings, that ſhe viewed him with the partiality of a friend, though ſo ſhort a time had elapſed ſince ſhe firſt ſaw him. At the door of the inn ſtood his brother, who, for the firſt time, occupied Edelfrida's attention. This gentleman, ſhe had underſtood, was the elder; and though ſhe was prepoſſeſſed in favour of his brother, ſhe could not but acknowledge to herſelf, that he was beyond what ſhe had ever ſeen in manly beauty and elegance. His figure was all grace, his manner inſinuating and gentle, his face as faultleſs as her own.—Mr. Henry Evelyne was leſs perfect in perſonal beauty; and when he did not ſpeak, there was a certain hauteur in his countenance, of which his brother had not the leaſt tincture: yet when he addreſſed Edelfrida, not only his countenance, but his voice, was harmonized into the moſt engaging, but manly ſoftneſs.—

Edelfrida

Edelfrida gazed on the brothers; but even at this early period, with every natural perfection ſo ſuperior in the elder, her heart gave a ſilent aſſent in favour of the generous Henry, who had ſoothed her feelings, and put her into humour with herſelf during their ride.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN the carriage ſtopped, Mr. Evelyne advanced to aſſiſt Edelfrida to alight; he hoped ſhe had recovered her alarm, and felt no painful effects from it. This was no more than politeneſs dictated, and what any other perſon would have uttered, on the like occaſion; but then his words were accompanied with an indeſcribable grace, which never failed to give them value, —Edelfrida was charmed with him, but to his brother ſhe ſeemed bound by ſome hidden chain, which was light, though irreſiſtible, and ſhe turned involuntarily, as Mr. Evelyne led her into a room, to look if Henry followed; her eye met his in its ſearch, and ſhe coloured, ſhe knew not why—he ſaw the emotion with a tranſport for which he was unable alſo to account, and not

ſtaying

ſtaying to enquire minutely into the cauſe, he purſued the object of it, and immediately joined his brother, in begging her permiſſion to make one carriage convey them to the next ſtage, and ſo on to Calais; as they were all going the ſame road, they urged every motive likely to weigh with her, not forgetting the late accident which might have proved fatal; at length they conquered her reluctance which ſprung merely from a ſenſe of propriety, which ſhe feared to offend, in accepting the offer of ſtrangers; ſhe however yielded to their importunity, and her own inclination; and it was agreed that they ſhould conſider themſelves of one party till they arrived in London. A coach then was ordered, and after ſome little refreſhment, the travellers again purſued their route towards England, becoming every hour more delighted with each other, as they had opportunity of diſplaying (not oſtentatiouſly) their

ſentiments

ſentiments and accompliſhments—had Edelfrida been their darling ſiſter, ſhe could not have experienced more tender attention and delicate regard than ſhe found in the amiable brothers, who beheld her with no common degree of approbation: not a word or look eſcaped either which could alarm or offend the moſt rigid decorum, yet their language appeared to flow from their hearts, and the expreſſion of their countenances to riſe ſpontaneouſly from the ſame ſource; Edelfrida, therefore, ſeemed amply juſtified in believing them the moſt amiable of mankind.—She was inſtructed and entertained by their obſervations, gratified by their reſpectful kindneſs, and guarded by their preſence from danger—no wonder then that a mind like hers, ever ready to receive indelible impreſſions, ſhould fondly, though innocently cheriſh love for the one and friendſhip for the other,

of

of that enthuſiaſtic kind which neither time nor chance could conquer.

Having travelled in ſafety through France, they at length arrived at Calais, from whence they ſailed to Dover. During this little voyage, Edelfrida again experienced the moſt flattering attention from her new friends, who not being affected themſelves, except in a very ſlight degree by ſea-ſickneſs, exerted all their powers to ſupport, and leſſen every inconvenience, their fair fellow traveller was ſubject to on board the pacquet; grateful for every inſtance of ſuch unhoped for and ſuch ſoothing kindneſs, her heart expanded each moment to receive with all the fervency of youth images bright and captivating, as thoſe which imprinted themſelves on it. Mr. Henry Evelyne firſt directed her eyes to her native ſhore, which now became every inſtant more diſtinct.

"There," ſaid he taking her hand, "there is the happy country where we

"may

"may proclaim every laudable ſenti-
"ment of our hearts, and indulge that
"freedom of choice which gives value
"to all our other bleſſings; liberty,
"when it does not degenerate into li-
"centiouſneſs, is the ſoul of all our
"enjoyments, and we ſhall find it as
"perfect, I believe, as the nature of
"things below will admit, in our
"native England, where I hope to im-
"prove that (may I not call it) friend-
"ſhip, which a kind chance has given
"me an opportunity of forming. Will
"you, my fair friend, allow me to ſee
"you, whenever I can eſcape from the
"precincts of the dull univerſity? will
"you permit me to ſolace myſelf in
"your ſweet ſociety, for the hours
"which I am compelled to ſpend
"amongſt pedants, or in turning over
"the tedious volumes, through which
"we are condemned to make our way
"to learning and ſcience?"

"I cannot be ſo ungrateful," re-

plied Edelfrida, "to refuſe you this "trifling gratification, if it can really "be called a gratification; and as far as "my will extends, Mr. Evelynes are "ever certain of finding a friendly re-"ception wherever I am. I cannot, "however, anſwer for thoſe to whoſe "houſe I am going. It may not be "agreeable to Sir Edward and Lady "Dudley to allow me the privilege of "receiving my friends, in which caſe "you will not deem me unmindful, or "on that account unworthy, of the at-"tention I have experienced, or the "obligation it has laid me under."

"I would not for the world be the "occaſion of creating any diſpleaſure "in Sir Edward and Lady Dudley," ſaid Mr. Henry Evelyne; "I ſhould "never forgive myſelf, if on my "account you received any harſh "reprimand from them; I will there-"fore, to avoid the poſſibility of it, "truſt once again to chance, who has

ſo

"ſo greately befriended me hitherto,
"hoping to be conducted to ſome of
"thoſe places of public reſort, which
"you will doubtleſs frequent ſome-
"times, and there when you conde-
"ſcend to acknowledge me with a gra-
"cious ſmile, I will aſk you, if I may
"enjoy an hours converſation with you
"at home, without incurring the diſ-
"approbation of the family — whoſe
"characters will quickly unfold them-
"ſelves to you."—Mr. Evelyne now joined them, and his brother ſaid, "I "have been making a bargain with "Miſs Dudley, Frederic."

"I hope," replied Mr. Evelyne, "my intereſt was not wholly forgotten "in it."

"To ſay the truth," returned the other, "I believe ſelf was uppermoſt in "my thoughts, while I ſtipulated with "our amiable friend, for leave to viſit "her ſometimes; but I am ſure ſhe will "forgive the treſpaſs on her goodna-

"ture, if you ſolicit for a like indul-
"gence, on the ſame terms."

"On the ſame terms, Henry!" exclaimed his brother with an arch ſmile, "have you the generoſity to wiſh Miſs "Dudley's favour ſo equally diſpenſ-"ed?—that is more than I had dared "to expect."

Mr. Henry Evelyne coloured at this quick converſion of his meaning and his expreſſion, into a ſenſe he had no idea of giving them; he merely alluded to the converſation which had juſt paſſed on the ſubject between Edelfrida and himſelf and which he was going to explain—Edelfrida promptly took up the explanation, without ſeeming to obſerve the implication of Mr. Evelyne's ſpeech, and immediately ſaid: "Your brother "is ſo good as to let me make a con-"dition with him, in conſideration of "my dependant ſtate at Sir Edward "Dudley's, where I may not have the "liberty of ſeeing my friends and ac-"quaintance, though their number is

"ſo

"ſo very ſmall."—The recollection of the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained, with the mention of her dependant ſtate, never failed to make a tear gliſten in Edelfrida's eye.

The brothers beheld it with a ſympathetic concern, and Mr. Henry Evelyne, thrown off his guard by his brother's hint of his ſentiments, ere he had perfectly conſidered them himſelf, now ſuddenly exclaimed, preſſing Edelfrida's hand to his lips with unuſual warmth: "You are right, Frederic, I am not ſo "generous as to be ſatisfied with only an "equal ſhare of Miſs Dudley's favour; I "aſpire to the poſſeſſion of an undivided "regard; but, perhaps, this premature "diſcloſure of my preſumptuous hopes "and wiſhes, may render me the object "of her reſentment, rather than as I "ſigh to be, that of her approbation."

Edelfrida's face was inſtantly covered with a deep bluſh, and ſo confuſed were her ſenſations, that ſhe knew not whe-

ther joy or ſorrow oppreſſed her heart; ſhe withdrew not her hand, however, for the powers of recollection had forſaken her.

Mr. Henry Evelyne proceeded: "If "my beloved and amiable Miſs Dud- "ley will condeſcend to accept the little "independence of a younger brother, "if ſhe will kindly conſtitute me the "happy guardian of her peace, thoſe "unjuſt and unfeeling relations, who "are unworthy of the truſt heaven has "repoſed in them, ſhall no longer have "power to tyrannize over the feelings "of the moſt lovely of women."

Edelfrida knew not what to reply: indeed the powerful emotions of her mind, would not allow her to utter a ſingle ſentence; beſides which, a ſecret ſomething whiſpered her, that he who addreſſed her, and intreated for her favour, was a total ſtranger, whom accident threw in her way; and though appearances were all loud in his praiſe, yet

prudence demanded a more intimate knowledge of his character and condition. Thus Caution and Common Senſe pleaded, while Inclination oppoſed them, and Candour united to believe the youthful advocate all he ſeemed to be — generous, animated, affectionate, and ſincere. The delicacy and reſerve of her ſex, however compelled Edelfrida to decline accepting Mr. Henry Evelyne's propoſal, at leaſt till they were better known to each other, and till ſhe was authoriſed by her uncle's conſent; heſitating, bluſhing, and confuſed, ſhe thanked him for his good opinion, and more for the proof he had given her of it; aſſured him ſhe was unworthy the honour, and gently declared her reſolution to be directed or ſanctioned in her choice on ſo important a ſubject, by Sir Edward Dudley, if ſhe found him willing to intereſt himſelf for her future happineſs.

"I own the juſtice and propriety

"of your determination, my charming "friend," replied the greatly enamoured Henry, "but yet let me conjure you to leave me Hope for my "companion and comforter. If Sir "Edward Dudley does not wholly discourage my pretenſions, his angelic "niece will, I truſt, ſmile on them "hereafter."

"I," ſaid Mr. Evelyne, "who have "witneſſed the growing affection of "my brother, cannot remain ſilent, when "his happineſs is ſo materially concerned;—do then, dear amiable Miſs Dud-"ley, do vouchſafe to bid him hope; "I will ſtake my life and honour on "his faith and conſtancy, and ſhould "he deceive you, reſt aſſured I will "reſent the injury, though he is my "deareſt friend.—You are about to enter into a ſcene of gaiety, of elegance, "and ſplendor, which I preſume is "hitherto unknown to you; there, my "lovely friend," continued he, taking

her

her hand, which she had gently withdrawn from his brother in the course of her reply to him, "there you will doubtless find many happy in the opportunity of doing homage to your superior charms; many, perhaps, who possess the brilliant advantages of rank and fortune; but believe me, nor think I speak with the partiality of a friend and brother, when I declare that you will find none whose intrinsic worth better deserves your esteem, than he who now sues for your affection; if you can return that affection, have the generous candour to acknowledge it; but if you think the mediocrity of his condition beneath your acceptance, he ought unrepining to submit to your decree; yet do not flatter him into security of your favour;—that would be inconsistent with the virtues which beam forth on your countenance, and bid us expect all that is excellent in woman."

 "Ah,

"Ah, Frederick," cried Mr. Henry Evelyne, "do not urge my fate; let "Miſs Dudley pronounce it, with an "unbiaſſed judgment; let her firſt read "every thought of my heart; let her "learn every circumſtance of my con-"dition—then, if on reflection ſhe re-"jects my unalterable love, I muſt in-"deed ſubmit."

Edelfrida, whoſe burning cheek and down caſt eye beſpoke her inward agitation, could not endure to think that the generous Henry ſhould believe her cold, unfeeling, and ungrateful. She now made an effort to ſpeak, but her voice faultered, and the words died away in a murmuring ſound; yet with a grace which no time or circumſtance could deprive her of, ſhe held out her hand to him, which he ſeized with rapture, and on which he imprinted a thouſand kiſſes, believing truly that it was meant as a token of the regard ſhe could not expreſs. After recovering her-

ſelf

ſelf a little, ſhe ſaid in a low voice and with a timid air, "be aſſured, Sir, I feel as "I ought, your diſintereſted friendſhip, "and I will endeavour to repay it as it "deſerves.—You muſt thank Mr. Eve-"lyne for me; the generous concern he "has taken in my happineſs, merits all "my gratitude, but ſuffer me now to "recollect myſelf for a few minutes "alone, ere we land;" ſaying this, ſhe withdrew to the cabin, which was empty, the paſſengers all crowding upon deck, in order to view the Engliſh coaſt.

CHAPTER V.

EDELFRIDA, with very different ſenſations to thoſe which had occupied her mind when ſhe took leave of her friends at Nice, now landed in her native country. She was then agitated with grief and hopeleſs of happineſs; now, though prudence checked the romantic enthuſiaſm of her imagination, yet ſhe was at once delighted and gratified by the conqueſt ſhe had gained over the heart of a man, whoſe honour and ſincerity ſhe did not allow herſelf to queſtion; her vanity too was highly flattered by the triumph her charms had evidently obtained over the cooler dictates of his reaſon, ſince ſhe could not but perceive that he had been ſurpriſed into a declaration of his paſſion for her, which convinced her of her own ſuperior powers of pleaſing, and rather

ther augmented the foible from which her father had foreſeen conſequences unfavourable to her happineſs.

Being fatigued by the ſickneſs ſhe had endured on board the paquet, ſhe very ſoon retired to her room, in the inn at Dover; having, ere ſhe wiſhed them good night, agreed with Mr. Evelynes to ſet out the next morning at an early hour.

She found it, however, no eaſy matter to compoſe herſelf to ſleep; her mind dwelt on Mr. Henry Evelyne's declaration with peculiar pleaſure. There was ſomething ſo candid, ſo generous, and ſo unlike the cold policy of the world in it, that the more ſhe reflected, the more ſhe felt herſelf inclined to repay the diſintereſted affection with all her heart.

The next morning ſhe joined her fellow travellers at breakfaſt, with a complacency of mind and manners which rendered

rendered her perſonal charms peculiarly attractive to thoſe who deem gentleneſs an eſſential, in the diſpoſition and character of a woman, and the brothers evidently marked it high in their eſtimation of female worth. Edelfrida's heart had been much ſoftened, by the parting between herſelf and that old and faithful ſervant who had been accuſtomed to attend her with anxious tenderneſs from her infancy; this good woman was to proceed to London in the coach, leaving her fair and youthful miſtreſs to travel in a chaiſe with the two gentlemen. All ſcruples of truſting herſelf with them being now unneceſſary, Edelfrida took an affectionate leave of this ancient domeſtic of her family, who promiſed to call upon her at her own particular requeſt, when ſhe got to town, where ſhe expected to find ſome of Sir Edward's family, ready to conduct her to Dudley Park; it being yet too early a ſeaſon for people of faſhion to reſort to

their

their houſes in London, the month of October not being at an end, though very near it.

Mrs. Williams then ſet out in the ſtage-coach, after aſſuring Edelfrida, that ſhe was ſo entirely devoted to her intereſt, that whenever ſhe ſhould be in a ſituation to receive her ſervices, ſhe would inſtantly obey a ſummons to attend her in any part of the world, nor would ſhe engage in any new place without making that a condition, that ſhe might be releaſed whenever her dear lady required her preſence.——This inſtance of gratitude failed not to impreſs the mind of Edelfrida with ſentiments of reſpect and affection, for one whoſe attachment was proof againſt all the caſualties of Fortune; and it ſoftened, while it ſoothed her feelings, and called forth all the amiable qualities Nature had beſtowed on her, and education improved. She was now left ſolely to the care and protection of her new friends,

who

who were uniformly ſolicitous to render her every kindneſs in their power. Once more ſeated in the carriage then, they ſet forward towards London at an early hour, in order to reach it that night, without being too late on the road.

Though pleaſed with her companions, and free from apprehenſion, Edelfrida could not retrace the country through which ſhe had journeyed with her father, without feeling emotions of mournful ſenſibility, which raiſed the ſigh from the bottom of her heart, and called the moiſt drops of ſorrow into her eyes. This did not eſcape the obſervation of the watchful Henry, who ſecretly bleſſed the hand which had implanted the ſeeds of virtue in the mind of her whoſe beauty had charmed his ſenſes. He viewed this tribute of natural grief to the memory of a beloved parent, as an earneſt of the future happineſs he expected to poſ-

ſeſs,

ſeſs, when he ſhould be permitted to call Edelfrida his wife, a period to which he looked forward with a degree of certainty, which gave to his manners, when he addreſſed her, an affectionate kind of familiarity, that the length of their acquaintance might not juſtify in the eye of the punctilious, yet it was ſo tempered with a delicacy, which adorned all his ſentiments, that Edelfrida herſelf had no cauſe of complaint.

As they drew nearer London, ſhe began to be leſs tranquil in her mind. The approaching meeting with her uncle and his family, of whom ſhe had conceived no favourable ideas, together with the approaching ſeparation from the man ſhe had every reaſon to eſteem and value; ſhe was yet too much a ſtranger to thoſe ſenſations which conſtitute the paſſion of love, to be certain whether he had a warmer intereſt in her affection; time and circumſtances could

alone

alone aſcertain the ſtate of her heart.—She felt, however a weight upon her ſpirits, at the thoughts of taking leave of him, which indicated the influence of that all-conquering Deity to whom the proudeſt hearts have yielded implicit obedience.

At the beginning of the laſt ſtage Mr. Henry Evelyne ſeemed to have caught the infection of extreme gravity from his fair neighbour; there was a longer pauſe than uſual in the converſation, after they were ſeated in the chaiſe; at length Mr. Evelyne ſaid:

"You are improvident, Henry; re-
"collect that a very ſhort time, indeed,
"will rob you of the felicity you may
"now enjoy, and do not ſuffer it to
"eſcape in melancholy and ſilence."

"Very true," replied his brother,
"and not more true than painful is it,
"that ere long I muſt bid adieu to my
"preſent happineſs; indulge me then,
"my dear Miſs Dudley, in a repetition

"of

"of thoſe ſentiments you have inſpired
"me with—and as we muſt of neceſſity
"part for a time, let me intreat you to
"ſoften the pangs of abſence by the
"only means which can render it ſup-
"portable to me. I hope you will
"not think I preſume too far, when I
"aſk to hear conſtantly from you,
"while I am obliged to remain at Cam-
"bridge, or whenever I am carried
"from the place where you reſide."

"You recollect," returned Edelfrida, "that I reſolved not to enter
"into any engagements without Sir Ed-
"ward Dudley's approbation; for to
"do otherwiſe, would be to defeat the
"purpoſe of my father's making him
"my guardian. Can I then, with any
"degree of propriety, conſent to an
"intercourſe of letters which might
"imply, that I had acted without the
"concurrence of his judgment, with-
"out his knowledge in the moſt im-
"portant affair of my life; you ſhall

"judge

"judge for me," continued ſhe, "and "I believe on your deciſion I may with "ſafety rely; tell me, in ſuch a caſe, "how you would wiſh a ſiſter to act, "and I promiſe to be guided by your "opinion."

"Now, Henry," cried Mr. Evelyne, "Miſs Dudley has given you a fair "opportunity of proving yourſelf wor-"thy her confidence in your honour "and diſcretion."

"I hope," replied Mr. Henry Evelyne, preſſing Edelfrida's hand to his lips, "I hope my charming friend will "have no cauſe to ſuſpect my honour, "however my diſcretion may fall ſhort "of her expectations; but why leave "to me the deciſion of that in which "I am ſo warmly intereſted. Surely "there is a refinement in cruelty in "making me the arbiter."

"I gueſs," ſaid Edelfrida, ſmiling, "what your real ſentiments on the "ſubject are, from your unwillingneſs

"to

"to expreſs them; anſwer me therefore "this one plain queſtion, and that ſhall "determine for us;—ſhould you not "think that woman light, vain, and "worthleſs, who accepted every token "of the attachment of an amiable man, "giving him a tacit proof of her ap- "probation, by ſo doing, yet reſerving "to herſelf any poſitive avowal of her "intentions, either finally to fulfil his "expectations, or reject his propo- "ſals?"

"Moſt undoubtedly, I ſhould think "her unworthy of a pure and honour- "able attachment."

"Then ſuch a woman ſhould I be," reſumed Edelfrida, "if I ſuffered you "to dedicate your time and attention "to me, ſince it is not in my power to "ſay that I will poſitively conſider my- "ſelf bound to fulfil your expecta- "tions; though I ſhould be undeſerv- "ing of your eſteem, if I did not feel "grateful

"grateful for ſo generous a proof of "your regard."

She uttered this laſt ſentence with a down caſt eye, and an embaraſſed air; but in a tone of voice which penetrated to the heart of the attentive Henry, and convinced him he was not wholly indifferent to her.

"But," ſaid he, purſuing the ſubject with earneſtneſs, "you do not forbid "my applying to Sir Edward Dudley "for his conſent and approbation to "addreſs his amiable niece."

"I do not preſume to dictate to "you," ſaid Edelfrida, her cheek covered with a bluſh of confuſion, which the whole converſation was calculated to give birth to.

"Ere we part, then," continued Mr. Henry Evelyne, "let me thank my "ever-gentle, generous friend, for what "I arrogantly take as her conſent to "my wiſhes; and let me alſo tell her, "that

" that though my fortune will in leſs
" than one year be in my own poſſeſ-
" ſion, independent of my family and
" connexions; yet I have an uncle to
" whom I owe the duty of a ſon, having
" been educated under his direction, and
" having experienced every kindneſs
" and indulgence from his affection; 'tis
" true, that now, like a truant boy, I
" am rambling, without his knowledge;
" our excurſion to the Continent was a
" ſudden frolic, of which there was no
" time to aſk his approbation; I there-
" fore wiſh to inform him of it myſelf,
" which I ſhall do when I ſee him, and
" that I expect will be immediately after
" Chriſtmas, when he will be in London,
" where I ſhall join him for a ſhort time;
" and when I make him acquainted
" with our ſecret expedition, I ſhall alſo
" tell him of the loſs I ſuſtained in the
" courſe of it; I ſhall take an opportu-
" nity of ſhewing him the fair thief,
" and intereſt him to be my advocate

" with

" with her, and Sir Edward Dudley;
" and, in juſtice, you muſt either ſend
" me back my own heart, or yours,
" my fair friend, in lieu of it.—But,
" to be perfectly ſerious;—let me aſk
" you how I am to exiſt till this old
" gentleman arrives from his ſeat in the
" Weſt of England? am I never to hear
" from you? am I forbidden to viſit
" you; and, except when I can ſteal up
" to town, and ſteal a look at, or a word
" from you in public, am I con-
" demned to drag on the tedious hours
" in abſence and ſilence too?"

" Indeed," returned Edelfrida, " I
" could wiſh you were content to ſee
" me only as chance ſhall direct, and
" not expect to hear from me by letter.
" I have a great objection to clandeſ-
" tine proceedings, and the time will
" ſoon paſs away, which muſt elapſe
" ere we meet as we ought, with the
" approbation of our friends; if we may
" expect that. But your uncle, Sir,

" may

"may not think the dependant niece "of Sir Edward Dudley a proper con- "nexion for you; you know his cha- "racter and opinions, it were better, "then to be guided by that knowledge "in time, and ſpare yourſelf and me "all future mortifications and regrets, "by ſeparating now as friends, who "have no nearer intereſt in each others "happineſs than what friendſhip will "allow, if you have any reaſon to ima- "gine the gentleman of whom you "ſpeak will object to your intentions— "for, I confeſs," added ſhe, the colour mounting into her face, "that I ſhould ill "ſupport thoſe marks of diſapprobation "your uncle might beſtow on me, nor "ſhould any conſideration tempt me "to diſregard them."

Eager to diſſipate all idea of his uncle's objecting to his wiſhes, Mr. Henry Evelyne aſſured Edelfrida that he had nothing to fear either from the authority or the diſpoſition of his relation, having

always found him uniformly anxious to promote his happineſs; "and he has hi-
"therto," ſaid he, "given me credit
"for diſcernment ſufficient to guide me
"to the attainment of it; I mean that
"portion of it, reaſon allows us to hope
"for. When I tell him then, that I
"have choſen my ſhare, and preſent
"him to the amiable object of my
"fondeſt hopes and wiſhes, can I poſ-
"ſibly imagine he will, for the firſt
"time in his life, bid me relinquiſh
"the dear flattering proſpect? No; on
"the contrary, the benevolence of his
"heart will inſtruct him to aid my
"purpoſe, and plead my cauſe; time
"will convince my lovely friend of the
"truth of what I aſſert, till when, I
"ſhall obey her, and truſt to chance,
"alone, for the delight of converſing
"with her."

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE Mr. Henry Evelyne ſpoke, and Edelfrida liſtened with inward ſatisfaction, the chaiſe entered the great metropolis; the poſtillion had before received orders to ſtop at Sir Edward Dudley's houſe in St. James's-ſquare, and thither he now directed his horſes, while Edelfrida exclaimed:

"Good heavens! in a few minutes I "ſhall be ſubject to the power of re- "lations it is not in my nature to re- "ſpect."

"Perhaps," replied Mr. Henry Evelyne, "you will find them of happier "diſpoſitions than you expect; but "if you do not — there is an alter- "native, which I hope you will not "think very deſperate, to that of liv-

" ing in a ſociety deſtructive to your " tranquillity."

" I ſincerely hope," ſaid ſhe, " that " it will not be neceſſary for me to quit " my uncle's houſe precipitately ;— " whenever I do leave it, I wiſh it may " be with credit to myſelf, and all " thoſe who kindly intereſt themſelves " in my welfare."

" I am convinced it will be ſo," returned he, with animation : at that inſtant the chaiſe ſtopped, and the door was immediately opened. Mr. Evelyne's man rode up to the porter and announced Miſs Dudley ; the attention of the party in the carriage was arreſted by his reply :

" The family are not in town ; but I " have orders to deliver a letter for Miſs " Edelfrida Dudley, which I will in- " ſtantly fetch."

" Not in Town !" reiterated Edelfrida, in a tone of ſurprize, " what then " am I to do ?"

" The

"The letter will explain that," returned Mr. Evelyne, "and here it is," added he, taking it from the ſervant, who alſo brought a light to the carriage window, as by this time it was too dark to diſtinguiſh ſmall objects without aſſiſtance.—Edelfrida haſtily broke the ſeal, and read——

My Dear Couſin,

IT was fully my intention to have met you in town, in order to conduct you from thence to Dudley Park, but the ſudden illneſs of Lady Wilford, obliges me to accompany my father and mother to Wilford Lodge, for which purpoſe the carriage is now ordered; be aſſured, however, that the inſtant my ſiſter is reſtored to that ſtate of health in which I can with comfort leave her, I will fly to London, where I hope to find you well, and not leſs inclined to receive me as your future friend, than I am to indulge myſelf in

the pleaſing expectation of acquiring in you a valuable addition to all thoſe enjoyments which are heightened by the participation of friendſhip; in the mean time my father deſires me to direct you to the houſe of Mr. Miller, ——ſtreet, in the City; where he hopes you will be accommodated more to your ſatisfaction, than in our empty habitation in St. James's-ſquare. — Mr. Miller's family are prepared for your reception.

We all join in offering you our moſt affectionate regards; and aſſure yourſelf, my dear Couſin, that I ſhall be happy, as ſoon as poſſible, to tell you in perſon, how ſincerely

I am your faithful friend,

MARIA DUDLEY.

Dudley Park.

IV.

The contents of this kind epiſtle reſtored Edelfrida to herſelf again; the quickneſs of her feelings on the apparent

rent mortifying neglect of her family, having very much diſcompoſed her for a few minutes.

Mr. Henry Evelyne alſo read it;—and returning it with a ſmile, ſaid: "I am ſure you will have the candour "to acknowledge, that haſty judg-"ments are frequently erroneous;"—then bidding the poſtillion drive to Mr. Miller's, in the City, he congratulated Edelfrida on the friend ſhe had ſo fair a proſpect of finding in her couſin, Miſs Dudley.

She thanked him, and added: "you "very juſtly reproved me for conclud-"ing raſhly; tis the error of my life, "I muſt confeſs:—and, perhaps, you "owe to it an opinion which certainly "has not the ſanction of experience, or "the juſtification of knowledge."

"Very true," replied he, "your re-"tort is perfectly juſt, on the principle "of knowledge and experience;—I "have no claim to your good opinion;

" but if, indeed, I am ſo happy to poſ-
" ſeſs it, though the foundation be leſs
" ſolid, ſtill let me retain it, till time
" ſhall enable me either to confirm my
" title, or till you are convinced I am
" unworthy of it, for your ſake as well
" as my own. I hope that the facility
" of which you accuſe yourſelf, in
" forming opinions, may produce
" only, as in the preſent caſe, ſurpriſe
" the moſt agreeable, and pleaſure the
" moſt permanent."

" I thank you for the wiſh," ſaid Edelfrida, " and moſt heartily join in " it."

" I ſay, amen;" cried Mr. Evelyne, " and here, behold, we are to reſign " our fair charge for the preſent; for " the chaiſe ſtops."

" Ere we part, however," ſaid his brother, eagerly interrupting him, " let " me aſk permiſſion to call in the morn-" ing; the family will conſider it as a " neceſſary piece of civility only."

" I can

"I can have no objection," replied Edelfrida, and at that moment a ſervant opened the door, and immediately a young woman appeared at it, to receive her expected gueſt. Edelfrida's name was alſo announced here by Mr. Evelyne's man; the miſtreſs of the houſe, as the travellers imagined her to be, advanced towards the chaiſe door, and with more civility than grace, welcomed Miſs Edelfrida Dudley to England. "I have expected you," added ſhe, "theſe two hours, and really be-
"gan to be terrified, leſt you had met
"with ſome accident."

Edelfrida thanked her for her concern, though not with the ſame air of eaſy familiarity with which ſhe expreſſed it. This paſſed ere her fair gueſt could diſengage herſelf from the carriage, during which time Miſs Miller, (for ſuch ſhe proved to be) ſurveyed the two gentlemen with a curious glance, and Edelfrida would have taken

leave of them at the door, and was wiſhing them good night for that purpoſe; but Miſs Miller exclaimed:

"O dear! pray deſire the gentlemen "to walk in with you, Ma'am; ſure I "ſhall be very happy in their compa- "nies, or any friends of yours."

Mr. Evelynes bowed, — Edelfrida ſmiled,—and Miſs Miller repeating her invitation, they accepted it; and followed the ladies into the houſe, and into a well-furniſhed room up ſtairs, where they were all requeſted to ſit down.

Miſs Miller then again addreſſed herſelf to Edelfrida, ſaying: "Well, I "proteſt Miſs Edelfrida Dudley, I am "exceſſively glad to ſee you ſafe ar- "rived. Sir Edward wrote my father "word that you would be here as this "day; and I have been expecting "every carriage to ſtop at our door for "theſe two hours, as I told you.—Sir "Edward did not mention the gentle-

"men,

" men, or I ſhould not have thought ſo
" much of your being late; for when
" one has company, one does not mind
" the time ſo as when one is alone, or
" has only a ſervant, which I fancied
" was your caſe."

" It was my caſe, Ma'am," replied Edelfrida, " till I had the good fortune
" to meet with theſe gentlemen on the
" road. They relieved me from a diſ-
" agreeable accident occaſioned by
" an overturn of the chaiſe I was in;
" and they were afterwards ſo obliging
" to inſiſt on ſeeing me ſafe to Lon-
" don."

" You will agree with us," ſaid Mr. Evelyne, " that in ſo doing, we were
" very obliging to ourſelves."

" O dear, yes indeed, Sir;" replied Miſs Miller, " I dares to ſay you had
" great pleaſure in it; Miſs Edelfrida
" appears very agreeable."

Edelfrida bowed, but could ſay no-

thing in return for this extraordinary compliment. Mr. Henry Evelyne caſt on her a ſignificant look, then turning to Miſs Miller, ſaid:

"I am convinced, Ma'am, that you "will be confirmed in that opinion in "the courſe of a very few hours; and "I truſt you will have the goodneſs to "let us hear it from your own mouth, "to-morrow; when, with your per-"miſſion, we propoſe ourſelves the "pleaſure of enquiring after this lady's "health, and enjoying an hour of your "charming ſociety."

He uttered this ſpeech with a gravity which paſſed on Miſs Miller for real; and ſo charmed was ſhe with his politeneſs, and his brother's ſtill handſomer perſon, that ſhe accorded to both her full and free conſent to come as often as they pleaſed and ſtay as long; ſhe even preſſed them to ſup with Miſs Dudley and herſelf; and when they excuſed themſelves, ſhe inſiſted on their

dining

dining with them the next day; to which they readily conſented; then took their leave.

They were no ſooner gone, than ſhe exclaimed: "Dear me, I never ſaw "two handſomer men in all my days! "are they brothers, Ma'am?"

Edelfrida anſwered in the affirmative.

"I am ſure," added ſhe, "the one "who ſat next you, is in love; don't "you think ſo?"

"Indeed," replied Edelfrida, ſmiling, though ſhe felt her cheek glow at the queſtion, "indeed, I can't poſſibly "tell."

"Well, well," cried Miſs Miller, "if you can't, I think his eyes did."

"I dare ſay you are a better judge "of the ſymptoms of love," replied Edelfrida, affecting an air of unconcern, "than I am. I ſaw nothing particular "in his eyes, except that they were "very fine ones."

"Ah!

"Ah! you are ſly; but we ſhall be "better acquainted, and then, perhaps, "you'll tell me more of your mind."

Never; ſaid Edelfrida, mentally, and the converſation was concluded by the entrance of Mr. Miller, a plain looking man, about fifty, unaffected in his dreſs and manner. He welcomed Sir Edward Dudley's niece to his houſe with a reſpectful gravity, and hoped her ſtay in it would be perfectly agreeable to herſelf.

Edelfrida returned his civility with her accuſtomed grace and ſweetneſs; and he then entered into the particulars of her journey; which ſhe gave him in a very ſhort and ſimple recital of all that had occurred on the road, not forgetting her introduction to Mr. Evelynes, in whoſe praiſe Miſs Miller launched forth with great volubility; but to which her father paid little regard, except to ſay, that he hoped Miſs

Dudley

Dudley would receive her friends whenever ſhe pleaſed.

Edelfrida thanked Mr. Miller, with whom ſhe was much leſs diſpleaſed, than with his pert, affected, vulgar daughter; he attempted to appear only what he was, a plain, honeſt tradeſman; while Miſs aped the airs of a fine lady, with manners ſo ill calculated for ſucceſs, that the failure rendered her perfectly ridiculous; her only merit ſeemed to be a fund of good humour, which was rather the reſult of inſenſibility, than the offspring of benevolence.

Edelfrida was too penetrating not to obſerve this, and the habit of forming an haſty opinion, operated to make her judge not favourably of her new acquaintance, Miſs Miller; but as her reſidence in her father's houſe gave her an unhoped for opportunity of ſeeing more of Mr. Henry Evelyne, ſhe could not regret it, though her companion was

fatiguing

fatiguing and even impertinent, through ignorance.

Supper now ſtopped the torrent of nonſenſe Miſs Miller poured forth, by employing her in entertaining Edelfrida with more ſubſtantial fare, than her ſlimſey chat. Plenty rather than elegance preſided at Mr. Miller's table, and a hearty welcome ſupplied the place of that more flattering politeneſs, which gracefully implies, what the other coarſly expreſſes.

Edelfrida was really weary in body as well as in mind, and therefore ſeized the firſt moment ſhe could, with civility, to requeſt Miſs Miller's leave, to retire to her appartment.

"My daughter," ſaid Mr. Miller, "would ſit up the whole night; but, "for my part, I like ſober hours; my "buſineſs obliges me to riſe early, and "my health calls upon me to go to bed "early likewiſe; but I beg Ma'am, that

"you

" you will conſult your own inclination
" only, while you ſtay with us."

" You are very good, Sir," replied Edelfrida; " I am accuſtomed to early
" hours; but, I preſume, I muſt ſoon
" learn to accommodate myſelf to more
" faſhionable ones. Miſs Miller, I
" dare ſay, will tell me that it is im-
" poſſible to live in London, without
" inſenſibly falling into the cuſtoms
" which prevail in it; and I am told
" that of converting night into day is
" almoſt arbitrary."

" At the other end of the town, too
" much ſo," ſaid Mr. Miller; " but I
" totally diſapprove of tranſplanting
" the cuſtoms and manners of the great
" and faſhionable, into the City. I
" think our citizens would be wiſer to
" wait till they have gained a fortune
" ſufficient to enable them to remove
" from the ſcene of induſtry in which
" they originate; they might then with
" a bet-

" a better grace plunge into diſſipation " and folly."

" You'll think my father very old " faſhioned," ſaid Miſs Miller, pertly.

" So much the better, child," replied he; " I only deſire to be thought " honeſt and ſincere in all my dealings; " and if your head ran leſs upon faſhion " and folly, you would ſtand a chance " of being more reſpectable in your " ſtation."

Miſs Miller, who diſliked this ſtrain of converſation, now roſe, and, taking a candle, offered to light Edelfrida to her room; an offer which was immediately accepted. She wiſhed Mr. Miller good night, and followed his daughter, who ſtaid with her till ſhe was undreſſed, complaining of the odd notions her father had picked up ſome where or other. She then left her to repoſe in peace.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER enjoying the moſt uninterrupted and refreſhing ſleep, Edelfrida roſe the next morning in the pleaſing expectation of ſeeing Mr. Henry Evelyne. She found Miſs Miller ready to receive her; and being joined by Mr. Miller, after the compliments of the morning were over on all ſides, they ſeated themſelves at the breakfaſt table, where Edelfrida diverted herſelf with the ſtriking contraſt between the father and daughter: the former ſcarcely uttered a ſentence in a quarter of an hour; the other never ceaſed to rattle with the moſt flippant thoughtleſſneſs, grave, cold, and ſententious. Mr. Miller condemned the vices and follies of the age, while his daughter ran on in praiſe of its pleaſures and refinements, none of which

ſhe

ſhe had a taſte to enjoy, though ſhe ſighed with envy and regret to ſee others in poſſeſſion of them;—her dreſs proved that ſhe had a turn for expence; and her vanity indicated her belief, that ſhe only wanted opportunities of ſhining and being admired like the beauties ſhe ſaw ſometimes, and heard frequently of, though in fact her perſonal attractions were almoſt as few as her mental ones; but a certain ſelf complacency, which ignorant and vain people generally poſſeſs, kept Miſs Miller in good humour with herſelf.

When breakfaſt ended, Mr. Miller retired to his counting-houſe, leaving Edelfrida and his daughter to amuſe themſelves.

"I wiſh the gentlemen would come," ſaid the latter, "for then we might "take a walk out, you know; it's ſo "dull in this here ſtreet, you'll be "quite moped; beſides, as it's a great "while ſince you was in London, there

"is

" is a deal of things to ſhew you, and " I ſhould be ſo glad if I could enter- " tain you, you can't think."

" I am greatly indebted to your " good inclinations towards me," replied Edelfrida; " but I aſſure you, " I feel no want of amuſement.

" You're very good to ſay ſo," returned Miſs Miller; " and I am ſure I " ſhould never be tired of your com- " pany; but then, when one has a " friend with one, one likes to go out " with them; and to be ſure I could " ſend to Mr. Parrot's, and deſire Miſs " Peggy and her brother John to walk " about with us; but I muſt own, the " gentlemen I ſaw laſt night are much " more genteeler, and I dare ſay you " would like their company better."

" I beg," ſaid Edelfrida, afraid of being dragged through the ſtreets by way of diverſion, " I beg, on my ac- " count you will not ſend to any one. " If Mr. Evelynes come in time, I am

" certain

" certain they will go out with us; if " not, ſome other day will do quite " as well."

To this Miſs Miller agreed, and deſired Edelfrida would favour her with a tune on the piano-forte, " for I am " ſure you can play," added ſhe.

" I do play a little," replied Edelfrida; " ſo I preſume you do, and " muſt beg you to ſet me the example."

This was all Miſs Miller aimed at; therefore, without heſitation, ſhe ſeated herſelf at the inſtrument, and began a long dull leſſon, through which ſhe was bllundering when in walked Mr. Evelynes. She ſtarted up with affected confuſion; but Mr. Evelyne, having paid his compliments to Edelfrida, turned to her, and with an air of gaiety led her back to her ſeat, ſaying, " Let " us not interrupt harmony, I intreat " you." Gratified by the ſlighteſt attention from a man of ſuch an elegant and captivating appearance, Miſs Miller

ler reſumed her place, and again thumped the poor inſtrument moſt unmercifully, while Mr. Evelyne ſtood over her exclaiming "Bravo!" every minute; meanwhile Mr. Henry Evelyne was whiſpering ſoft things in the ear of the bluſhing Edelfrida.—When Miſs Miller thought ſhe had ſufficiently charmed her auditors, ſhe got up, and deſired Miſs Dudley would now oblige them by playing. Edelfrida, to avoid importunity, or perhaps not diſpleaſed to have ſo fair an occaſion of exhibiting her own excellence, in contraſt with Miſs Miller's total want of taſte and execution, roſe from her ſeat to comply with the requeſt. There was an air of conſcious ſuperiority about her as ſhe moved to the inſtrument, which diſplayed a trait in her character Mr. Henry Evelyne had had no opportunity of obſerving before; but that it did not eſcape him now, Edelfrida was feelingly convinced by a reproving glance from his

his eye, which ſeemed to ſay, "The triumph is unworthy of you." This was the firſt look which had not betrayed approbation and admiration; and while it checked, it alſo mortified her riſing vanity.

During her reſidence in Italy, her father, who was anxious to render her as perfect in all reſpects as poſſible, had, at a great expence, procured maſters to inſtruct her in every branch of female education. They completed what was before begun in England.

For muſic ſhe had a brilliant genius, and ſoon played in the firſt ſtyle. She now however touched the keys with unuſual diffidence; but the harmony that touch produced, ſoon drew forth the warmeſt commendations.

The features of Mr. Henry Evelyne relaxed, and their expreſſion was delight.

At the united entreaties of the brothers, Edelfrida continued to play for a conſiderable time, and accompanied

the

the inſtrument with her voice in two or three beautiful airs which ſhe had brought with her. Miſs Miller mean time, having no muſic in her ſoul, grew weary of the praiſe beſtowed on her gueſt, and, on pretence of not fatiguing her, propoſed a walk to the gentlemen.

"A walk! my dear Ma'am," replied Mr. Evelyne, with an air of ſurpriſe.

"O yes," returned ſhe, "ſuppoſe "we go to the park; Miſs Edelfrida "will like the park vaſtly, I am ſure."

"But 'tis impoſſible, ſaid Mr. Evelyne, that either Miſs Dudley or you "ſhould walk to the park; it's quite "a journey."

"A journey," replied ſhe, laughing; "la! Sir, I have walked it a thouſand "times, and oftener. I dare ſay Miſs "Dudley wont be at all tired; but if "ſhe is, we can call a coach, you "know, to come home in."

"Had we not better call a coach to

"go in," ſaid he; our fair friend is not "accuſtomed to walk through London "ſtreets, and it may not be ſo pleaſant "to her."

"O dear yes, if you pleaſe" cried Miſs Miller, "I'll ſend our ſervant to "get one"

"I do not like the idea of your "going in a hackney coach, nor do I "think Miſs Miller a proper com-"panion out of this houſe, however "harmleſs ſhe may be in it," ſaid Mr. Henry Evelyne.

Miſs Miller was gone to order the coach, when this ſpeech was made.

"If you recollect," replied Edelfrida, "I am ſo entirely a ſtranger, "that it is very immaterial with whom "I am ſeen."

"True; you are at preſent a ſtran-"ger," returned he; "but as it is "poſſible, that by ſome accident you "may be obſerved, and recollected "again when you appear in a proper

"ſituation

"ſituation with Lady Dudley, you will
"perhaps find ſome one or other curi-
"ous and impertinent enough to en-
"quire who you were with in the park
"on ſuch a morning. You little know
"how difficult it will be to anſwer
"theſe queſtions. Truſt me, you will
"diſcover that Harry Evelyne is as
"inſignificant as Miſs Miller in the
"grand monde."

"I really believe," ſaid Edelfrida,
"that you are aſhamed of walking
"with us."

"That, without doubt, muſt be the
"caſe," replied he, ſmiling; and lead-
"ing her to the glaſs, he continued,
"aſk the object before you, if it is to
"be wondered at; who could think of
"appearing with ſuch a graceleſs figure
"abroad? but however, aukward and
"ugly as you are, I will truſt myſelf
"with you; and to Frederick we will
"commit the care of Miſs Miller, who

" is doubtleſs adorning herſelf for the " excurſion, by her long abſence."

" I am really much obliged to you," returned Mr. Evelyne, " for the agree- " able taſk you have aſſigned me; ſuch " is ever the fate of the poor fool who " thruſts himſelf into the company and " confidence of his love-ſtriken friends; " however, remember, Harry, I am " intitled to your good offices on a like " occaſion, if ever I ſhould be in a ſitua- " tion to claim them."

" Depend upon me," ſaid his brother. Miſs Miller entered, and ſtopped all further converſation on the ſubject. She was armed for conqueſt in a moſt faſhionable bonnet, a ſuperb cloak, and all the neceſſary appendages to render her dreſs complete; and ſurveying her- ſelf as ſhe paſſed the glaſs, her counte- nance beſpoke her perfect ſatisfaction. Her eyes were then turned on the gentlemen, particularly on Mr. Eve-

lyne,

lyne, for his brother ſhe looked upon as already diſpoſed of.

"Come, Miſs Edelfrida," ſaid ſhe, "wont you get ready? the coach will "be here in a minute."

"That minute will ſuffice for me," replied Edelfrida; and away ſhe went to fetch her cloak and gloves.

"It's a charming fine morning," ſaid Miſs Miller; "and will be ſo "pleaſant in the park; don't you think "ſo, Sir."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Evelyne, "in ſuch ſociety the park muſt be a "paradiſe."

"I am ſure you think ſo too, Sir," ſaid Miſs Miller (ſmirking at this compliment) to Mr. Henry Evelyne, at whom ſhe affected to look ſignificantly. He, provoked at her perſevering folly in going out, only bowed; and at the ſame inſtant the coach arrived, and Edelfrida re-entered the room. Immediately they ſet out on their way to

the park. At the bottom of Piccadilly they left their coach, and Mr. Evelyne taking charge of Miſs Miller, while his brother attached himſelf to Edelfrida, they walked up the mall. Mr. Henry Evelyne did not, however, appear as uſual, ſo much delighted with an opportunity of entertaining his lovely companion without obſervation. He talked but little, looked uneaſy, and was exceedingly conſtrained in his manners, which was far from being natural to him, at leaſt when he was converſing with his friends and favorites.

As London was at this time very empty, they met but few people of any note during their walk; but to thoſe few, Edelfrida was an object of curious enquiry, as far as their eyes could gratify their curioſity; one gentleman in particular ſeemed unwilling to loſe ſight of the beauty which had powerfully attracted him; and on him Mr. Henry Evelyne darted a look of fierce defiance,

which,

which, however, did not anſwer the purpoſe for which it was intended, that of relieving Edelfrida from a diſagreeable and diſtreſſing obſervation. This circumſtance, together with the gloomy humour which had taken poſſeſſion of her companion, rendered the walk far from pleaſant; and they returned to their coach again without having experienced the exhilarating qualities of air and exerciſe, except Miſs Miller, whoſe natural levity was heightened, by what ſhe ſuppoſed, the admiration of a man of faſhion and fortune. Mr. Evelyne, however, was not more rejoiced than his brother evidently was, to find himſelf once again on the way to Mr. Miller's houſe. Edelfrida ſaw the reluctance with which Mr. Henry Evelyne had accompanied them out with ſurpriſe, and not much pleaſure, for ſhe was totally at a loſs to gueſs from whence it could ſpring.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE gentlemen having apologized for their dreſs, ſpent the reſt of the day at Mr. Miller's; in the courſe of which Mr. Henry Evelyne recovered his wonted good humour, and endeavoured with even more aſſiduity than heretofore to render himſelf agreeable to Edelfrida. He perceived a little cloud upon her brow, the cauſe of which he gueſſed; yet he attempted not to explain what he was conſcious had diſpleaſed her: he rather aimed at making her forget that ſhe had been diſpleaſed at all; in which he ſucceeded ſo well, that ere the hour of retiring came, ſhe was in the moſt perfect harmony of ſpirits. She played and ſung the greateſt part of the evening; and at length found Mr. Henry Evelyne's company ſo neceſſary to her, that ſhe indulged

indulged the moſt agreeable ideas of being united to him. This inward ſatiſfaction diffuſed over her features a luſtre ſo mild and captivating, that he gazed with increaſing tenderneſs upon her; every look and geſture proclaimed the influence ſhe maintained over his mind; and her own became inſenſibly riveted to him ſo firmly, that ſhe conſidered happineſs inſeparable from her union with him.

He tore himſelf away at a late hour, but not without a promiſe that he ſhould find the ladies at home in the morning.

When the gentlemen were gone, Edelfrida complained of being ſleepy, as an excuſe to get quit of her troubleſome companion, Miſs Miller, who took the hint, and left her to herſelf, not leſs delighted, though with leſs reaſon to be ſo, with the occurrences of the paſt day.

According to appointment, the bro-

thers made their appearance at Mr. Miller's in the morning; and Miſs Miller, contented to enjoy Mr. Evelyne's ſociety at home, made no effort to walk in the park again; but ere they took their leave for that day, ſhe begged they would go to the play on the following evening with Miſs Edelfrida and herſelf, "for, that it was quite ſhocking to ſhut her friend up, now that ſhe was come to London."

"O! I can anſwer for Miſs Dudley," cried Mr. Henry Evelyne, with quickneſs, "that ſhe does not wiſh to go "into public at preſent: the plays are "very flat; and there is no company "in town now."

"You are very good, Sir," replied Edelfrida, reproachfully; "but had "you permitted me to ſpeak for my-"ſelf, perhaps I ſhould have expreſſed "a different opinion."—

The truth was—ſhe had no particular deſire to go to the play; but recollecting

ing the morning they had walked in the park, and remarking the ſame unwillingneſs on the part of the gentleman to enter into this ſcheme, her curioſity was rouſed to diſcover the ſource of this reluctance; ſhe therefore reſolved on promoting Miſs Miller's propoſal.

Her reply had diſconcerted Mr. Henry Evelyne.

"The liberty of ſpeaking for you, "Ma'am," ſaid he, with great gravity, "I confeſs, was unpardonable; nor "ſhould I have taken it, had I not "thought your ſentiments on this ſub-"ject were the ſame as my own: but "if, on the contrary, you ſee no im-"propriety in thus preſenting yourſelf "to the public eye, I ſhall not pre-"ſume further to diſpute the point "with you."

"O dear!" cried Miſs Miller, "there can be no impropriety, I am "ſure, in going to the play; good,

"gracious Sir, how formal you are! "why I go with Miſs Parrot and her "brother very often, and we get home "again as ſafe as can be."

Mr. Henry Evelyne bit his lips, and looked out of patience with her ſtupidity and folly; good manners, however, kept him from explaining, that ſhe herſelf, amongſt other reaſons, was an objection to Edelfrida's going into public.

Mr. Evelyne, who was milder in his expreſſion both of ſentiments and countenance, now took up the ſubject, and ſaid, "he was afraid the ladies, unleſs they could enlarge their party, would find it very diſagreeable getting into the play-houſe, it not being in his, or his brother's power to attend them there; though, if they determined to go, they would both make a point of being there in time to ſee them ſafe home again." "We have," added he, "an indiſpenſable engagement for to-

"morrow,

"morrow, which will detain us till "near nine o'clock."

"O I can make a party," replied Miſs Miller; "leave that to me; Miſs "Edelfrida ſhall not be diſappointed, "I am determined."

By this time Edelfrida was angry with herſelf, for taking the matter up in the manner ſhe had done; but her pride would not ſuffer her to acknowledge it; ſhe therefore remained ſilent, leaving it to Mr. Evelyne and Miſs Miller to ſettle it as they pleaſed, the ſame ſort of ſentiment operating on Mr. Henry Evelyne, who, conſcious that he had a motive for wiſhing her to ſtay at home, beyond what he choſe to expreſs, attended with an haughty kind of reſerve to what had paſſed; and when it was agreed, that he and his brother ſhould join the ladies at Drury-lane the following evening, he bowed aſſent, and ſoon after took his leave.

There was an evident ſtruggle be-

tween

tween his ſpirit and his tenderneſs, ere he left the houſe; but Edelfrida aſſuming an air of dignified reſerve to conceal her embaraſſment, he checked himſelf almoſt in the act of uttering that ſoothing language which ſeldom fails to tranquillize the mind to which it is directed. They parted therefore, apparently, on terms of cold civility, while each in their heart ardently wiſhed to baniſh all ſhow of reſentment, and reſume their wonted eaſe and cheerfulneſs.

Edelfrida tried for ſome time to conquer the vexation ſhe felt, but in vain; trifle as it was, and certain to be forgotten, ſhe could not reſiſt the impreſſion it made on her feelings; her pride and ſenſibility were wounded. She found a little mean ſuſpicion lurking in her mind of the man to whom ſhe had given her affections; but yet ſhe accuſed herſelf of having fooliſhly quarrelled with him.

She

She made her eſcape to her own room as ſoon as poſſible, in order to relieve the oppreſſion of ſpirit ſhe could not overcome. She wept for a conſiderable time; and in this indulgence found great pleaſure. The idea of her ſituation once more became painful to her; and this little incident converted all the brighter images of her imagination, which Mr. Henry Evelyne's avowed attachment had created, again into the gloomy habit of deſpair with which ſhe ſet out from Nice. The ſober light of reaſon had as yet gained but little aſcendency over her. The time was not arrived, when the neceſſity of regulating her extreme ſenſibility was to occur to her. Her underſtanding, though ſuperior, was not yet ſufficiently matured to govern her inclinations; and ſhe felt not the propriety of oppoſing the ſtrength of thoſe intellectual faculties which Heaven had endowed her with

with to the weakneſs of her nature, or the caprice of her humour.

On the evening of this tedious day, her thoughts were a little diverted from the ſubject of the morning's vexation, by the arrival of her old ſervant, who had been directed by Sir Edward Dudley's porter where to find her young miſtreſs.

This worthy and affectionate woman came to take leave of Edelfrida, having procured a place in the family of Lord Walton, to whoſe ſeat in the country ſhe was ſoon to ſet out, where her ſtation was to be houſe-keeper.

Edelfrida received her with pleaſure, intereſted herſelf warmly in her affairs, promiſed to write conſtantly to her, and when ſhe took leave, embraced her with tenderneſs, and ſhed tears at the ſeparation.

Such were the genuine effuſions of an uncorrupted heart; and when ſhe obeyed its dictates, ſhe never erred; but

but ſeventeen is not the age from which is to be expected undeviating propriety.

In her preſent frame of mind, Edelfrida found the converſation of Miſs Miller extremely fatiguing; but having no reſource, ſhe was compelled to ſubmit; for having no correſpondents, except Mr. Marr, to whom ſhe had written immediately on her arrival, ſhe could not plead the neceſſity of writing as an excuſe for not attending to ſilly remarks, and a vulgar affectation of exceſſive gentility, which is ever diſguſting to the really poliſhed and enlightened.

CHAPTER IX.

MISS MILLER, bent upon going to the play, took all the neceſſary ſteps towards the accompliſhment of her purpoſe. She ſent to her friend, Miſs Parrot, begging ſhe and her brother would be of the party; but unluckily the lady was indiſpoſed, and her brother engaged on buſineſs which could not be neglected.

This, however, did not diſcourage her; ſhe reſolved that one of her father's clerks ſhould attend them to their places, and that when they were ſafe there, they ſhould do very well till Mr. Evelynes joined them.

Edelfrida, who knew nothing of the matter, was ſatisfied with this arrangement, and conſented to go, though ſhe felt more inclined to ſtay at home, but that ſhe thought would be making a

conceſſion

conceſſion to Mr. Henry Evelyne, which her pride forbade.

The only ſeats Miſs Miller could procure, notwithſtanding the indefatigable pains ſhe had taken, were in the upper boxes; but as Edelfrida was ignorant of any diſtinction, ſhe made no objection to the ſituation allotted them. Miſs Miller informed her that it was unneceſſary to dreſs, therefore they both prepared to go in their hats, with, or without which was the only difference Edelfrida's deep mourning would ſuffer her to make in her appearance.

At the hour appointed then, they got into an hackney coach, attended by one of the clerks, and arrived at the Theatre ſome time before the curtain drew up. The play was Shakeſpeare's Twelfth-Night, a piece ſo replete with genuine beauties, that its repreſentation can never fail to afford the higheſt entertainment, particularly when the characters are ſo admirably filled as at

Drury

Drury Lane. Edelfrida, to whom this ſpecies of amuſement was altogether new — entered at once into the ſpirit of the performance, and loſt all recollection of the diſagreeable feelings ſhe came with.

She had read, and conſequently been delighted with the productions of our immortal bard, but to ſee his genius ſo inimitably pourtray'd, to hear the bright flaſhes of his humour, the happy originality of his expreſſion, ſo juſtly and feelingly pronounced; now animated her natural vivacity, now touched thoſe cords of ſenſibility which vibrate from the heart, and wrapt in the pleaſing enthuſiaſm, ſhe had neither eye nor ear for any object off the ſtage till the ſecond act ended; then turning to ſpeak to Miſs Miller, ſhe perceived that the ſeats which had been intended for the two Mr. Evelynes, were occupied by two ladies, whoſe dreſs and appearance had

had an air of gaiety which Edelfrida had not obſerved in the company who ſat below; but yet ſhe knew too little of London to diſcover what they really were. On the next bench behind them were alſo ſome young men, who on Edelfrida's turning her head, ſeemed to regard her with ſcrutinizing eyes, and amongſt them, ſhe perceived the perſon who had ſo rudely ſtared at her in the park. She now began to feel ſome little alarm, and to wiſh heartily that ſhe had been directed by Mr. Henry Evelyne's advice; it was, however, too late, and her fears encreaſed every moment; for the women began to titter and whiſper, and the men attempted to ſpeak to her, particularly the one whoſe boldneſs had before offended her, even while ſhe was protected by the preſence of a gentleman. Once alarmed, her feelings converted every thing around her into the moſt gigantic object of terror; and with ex-

treme

treme difficulty Miſs Miller prevailed upon her to remain in the box, by repreſenting to her the impoſſibility of getting away by themſelves, without encountering every thing that was diſagreeable. Edelfrida ſaw that Miſs Miller was even diſtreſſed by their ſituation, and knowing that her ſenſe of propriety was not very delicate, ſhe naturally concluded, that it muſt, indeed, be very mortifying, when her companion felt it ſo.

The curtain drew up again — but Edelfrida could no longer find any entertainment from the performance. Her agitation was too viſible to eſcape the notice of thoſe who cauſed it, and they ſeemed to delight themſelves with augmenting it, by a thouſand offenſive familiarities, which wounded her pride and her delicacy to a degree of agony.

No Mr. Evelynes appeared, and Edelfrida began to think they would not come; in their preſence ſhe reſted

ſolely

ſolely for relief from her preſent embaraſſment; yet, though ſhe caſt her eye anxiouſly towards the door every moment—ſhe dreaded the diſgrace of being found in ſuch company. She thought with the moſt acute vexation, of the figure ſhe ſhould make to Mr. Henry Evelyne, after having rejected his advice with ſo much *hauteur*; and thus every way ſhe was doomed to ſuffer the effects of her folly, in following the dictates of an idle curioſity and an injurious ſuſpicion.

The man who was moſt bent upon forcing himſelf on Edelfrida's attention, was one of thoſe bucks who infeſt public places, to the great annoyance of all ſober perſons who wiſh to enjoy the ſpectacle quietly. His courage and vivacity were the tranſient effects of wine; and ſuch was his prudence, that he rarely attacked thoſe who might have endangered his perſonal ſafety, by paying him for his wit with a cane, the only

only return that was due to it.—From Edelfrida he had no ſuch retort to expect; he therefore perſiſted in diſtreſſing her—admiring the beautiful variety of countenance his own impertinance created.—He preſſed her to eat fruit; praiſed her eyes and her complexion, and attempted frequently to ſeize her hand, whilſt the two ladies laughed and exulted in the ſcene.

No longer able to control her impatience to be gone, the play no ſooner ended, than Edelfrida declared to Miſs Miller, that ſhe would not ſtay another moment. Miſs Miller ſeeing her terror, and apprehenſive of its conſequences, roſe to accompany her, and they got out of the box; but ſcarcely were they on the other ſide, than Edelfrida found her tormentor at her elbow, begging to have the pleaſure of attending her home. She ſnatched her hand from him indignantly—and deſired he would

would not give himſelf the trouble of following them, as they choſe to go by themſelves." He then "vowed he would not leave her, for that ſhe was the moſt angelic creature he had ever ſeen, and he was reſolved to be better acquainted with her."

Her ſpirit would no longer ſupport itſelf, and ſhe burſt into tears. By this time they were in the lobby; but no one happened to be near them; and how to get to a coach without this incorrigible man, Miſs Miller knew not. Edelfrida was wholly incapable of reflection, fear and vexation had ſo entirely overpowered her. Trembling, and ready to ſink, ſhe had taken hold of Miſs Miller, while her troubleſome attendant attempted to ſupport her, and actually put his arm round her waiſt.

In that moment the Mr. Evelynes appeared. But what was their aſtoniſhment to behold Edelfrida in this ſitua-

tion! Her mortification was extreme, though her fears ſubſided.

"O dear!" exclaimed Miſs Miller, "I am ſo glad you're come, for Miſs "Edelfrida is ſo frighted, and this here "gentleman would follow us."

"Would follow you," repeated Mr. Henry Evelyne. "By what authority "do you preſume, Sir," ſaid he to him, "to diſtreſs this lady?"

"What the devil," replied the other, "have not I a right to ſpeak to a pretty "woman, if I pleaſe?"

"Inſolent puppy," cried the indignant Henry, ſeizing him by the arm, and twirling him to the other ſide the lobby with great force. Then taking Edelfrida by the hand, he led her towards the door, deſiring his brother to call up a coach.

But the buck, whoſe ſpirits were a good deal inflamed by the liquor he had drank, felt himſelf ſo much injured by this treatment, that he demanded

manded ſatisfaction in a moſt bluſtering ſtyle. Mr. Henry Evelyne coolly put his hand in his pocket, from whence he drew forth a ticket, which he preſented to his opponent, ſaying haughtily, "There, Sir, is my addreſs, if you have "any further commands with me;" then without further ceremony proceeded to the coach with his fair companion, whoſe apprehenſions were now transferred from herſelf to him. She had not yet ſpoken; for ſhe knew not what to ſay. Overwhelmed with a conſciouſneſs of having acted abſurdly in the firſt inſtance, and agonized with the apprehenſion of having drawn Mr. Henry Evelyne into perhaps a dangerous rencountre, ſhe was wholly incapable of uttering a ſyllable. Thus covered with ſhame for herſelf, and trembling with anxiety for him, ſhe took her ſeat in the coach, Miſs Miller being already in it. The gentlemen followed as ſilent as herſelf. But Miſs Miller, whoſe

fears were no more, and whoſe feelings were tolerably callous, had no idea of the ſentiments and reflections which occupied the reſt of the party, therefore reſolved to indulge her uſual propenſity to talk, if they would not.—

"Well, I vow," ſaid ſhe, "I was "never more frightened in all my life, "than I have been this evening; thoſe "men were ſo rude; and Miſs Edel- "frida looked ſo ſhockingly, that I "expected every minute when ſhe "would faint away."

"I ſhould have had very little idea, "Ma'am," replied Mr. Henry Evelyne, "that you would have put yourſelf "and Miſs Dudley into a ſituation ſo "ſtrikingly improper. The alarm you "have ſuſtained is even leſs than you "had reaſon to expect, conſidering the "light in which you have appeared."

Miſs Miller was going to defend herſelf; but Edelfrida burſting into tears, ſtopped the torrent of her tongue,

and

and ſoftened the aſperity with which Mr. Henry Evelyne felt inclined to treat the affair.

"My dear Miſs Dudley," ſaid he, preſſing her hand to his boſom, "your "ſenſibility inflicts on you more than "an adequate puniſhment for any tri-"fling offence againſt propriety; ſpare "yourſelf and me then the pain of "this agitation of ſpirits, which is the "conſequence of conſidering in too "ſerious a light what has happened; "think of it no more, my Edelfrida; "you were ignorant of the diſagreeable "attendants to which women are ex-"poſed in public, without they take a "protector with them, and therefore "have no right to accuſe yourſelf for "what is paſſed; pray be compoſed; "you can't imagine how you diſtreſs "me. Come," continued he, attempt-ing to treat it as a jeſt, "I am ſure, "like a good girl, you will promiſe me

"never to go to the play by yourself "again."

"That I will moſt readily," replied Edelfrida, a little cheered by his apparent jocularity. "I deſerve that you "ſhould ſcold me moſt heartily, rather "than excuſe for me; and were that "all the ill effects to be apprehended, "I would bear them patiently."

"Why," exclaimed he; "what ill "effects do you imagine more terrible "than my diſpleaſure? and that you "have vanquiſhed already."

"O! that horrid man," returned ſhe. "Did he not talk of ſatisfaction for "the inſult you offered him."

"My charming Edelfrida," replied Mr. Henry Evelyne, laughing, "let "him indulge himſelf with talking, "pray, for I do verily think that his in-"dignation will evaporate in words; "I am greatly miſtaken, if we hear "any more of the valiant gentleman; "but ſhould he be as blood-thirſty as

"you

"you apprehend, while I wear your
"cauſe upon my ſword, truſt me, I
"ſhall be invulnerable; and while you
"condeſcend to intereſt yourſelf in my
"ſafety, I have a ſhield of adamant
"round my heart which will repel
"every weapon, ſave one, and that one,
"though it pierces deeply, and can be
"drawn thence only with the life, yet
"brings with it ſo ſweet a pain, that I
"cannot ſhrink from its approach, nor
"guard myſelf from its power."

While this converſation paſſed in a whiſper between Edelfrida and Mr. Henry Evelyne, Mr. Evelyne talked and laughed Miſs Miller into good humour again, in order to prevent her liſtening. Little more of any moment paſſed till they were ſet down at Mr. Miller's door. The two gentlemen receiving an invitation to ſtay ſupper, ordered the coach at twelve o'clock, and accompanied the ladies into the parlour.

Juſt as they were ſeating themſelves

round the ſupper-table, a letter was delivered to Edelfrida, which the ſervant ſaid Mr. Dudley's man brought while ſhe was at the play. It was from Miſs Dudley, to inform her that ſhe ſhould be in St. James's-ſquare by eleven the next day, and would immediately ſend the carriage to convey Edelfrida to her; and that her brother would eſcort them both to Dudley-park the following morning.

Edelfrida knew not whether to be glad or ſorry for this intelligence; but as her feelings could make no alteration in the plan, ſhe endeavoured to be pleaſed with it, hoping to find in the ſociety of her couſin, that ſatisfaction Miſs Miller's could never afford her. Beſides, the difference of ſituation ſhe ſhould experience by the removal, gratified her pride.

But when ſhe made known the contents of the letter, Mr. Henry Evelyne, who before had appeared very cheerful, inſtantly

inſtantly loſt all ſemblance of vivacity, and became extremely thoughtful. The gravity of his countenance, which Edelfrida could not but obſerve, at once pained and pleaſed her: for ſhe had now no other idea, than that of conſidering herſelf as his deſtined wife; and in that light, every token of his affection delighted, while every ſymptom of his being diſpleaſed or uneaſy, gave her the keeneſt concern.

At twelve they parted, without having had any opportunity of ſpeaking apart to each other. But Mr. Evelyne's good nature, ever alive to contribute to the happineſs of his friend and brother, provided the lovers with an expedient, which gave them the time they wanted to ſettle their ſchemes ere they parted:—he invited himſelf and his brother to breakfaſt with Miſs Miller at an early hour the next morning, challenging the two ladies to be ready

for their reception at the appointed time.

Miſs Miller, ever delighted with Mr. Evelyne's attention, moſt willingly accepted the challenge; and Edelfrida, on the departure of the brothers, retired to put up the few things ſhe had had occaſion to unpack, that in the morning ſhe might have nothing to prevent her dedicating the ſhort time which remained in her poſſeſſion to Mr. Henry Evelyne.

She went to bed, and ſoon fell aſleep; but the events of the evening had made ſo powerful an impreſſion on her mind, that ſhe awoke in a violent agitation, from having dreamt that her beloved Henry was expiring in agonies, and that his death was cauſed by the wretch who had ſo perſecuted her at the play. The fearful image was not to be baniſhed; and after ſpending a moſt comfortleſs night, ſhe aroſe by the firſt dawn, anxious for the time when ſhe could

could learn ſomething to contradict this horrid viſion.

Almoſt agonized with impatience, ſhe waited till the appointed hour; then when ſhe heard the rap at the door, ſhe could ſcarcely reſtrain herſelf from flying down ſtairs to ſatisfy herſelf if he was ſafe.

Miſs Miller had not yet appeared; and Mr. Evelynes were in the room with Edelfrida ſome minutes ere ſhe came.

Edelfrida's countenance beſpoke the ſleepleſs night ſhe had paſſed, as well as the uneaſineſs of her mind; into the cauſe of which Mr. Henry Evelyne tenderly enquired.

"To tell the truth," ſaid ſhe, "the "idea of that ſtrange man haunted my "imagination ſo much, that I could not "ſleep; for I ſhould never forgive my-"ſelf, if my folly was to endanger "your life, or indeed his. To run ſo "great a riſk for ſo unworthy a ſubject,

" would be very wrong, and utterly
" deſtructive of my future peace of
" mind."

" My dear Edelfrida, reſt aſſured
" there is nothing to apprehend," replied he; " I am confident I ſhall hear
" no more of the play-houſe hero; he
" has ſlept upon the affair, and doubtleſs thinks it pleaſanter to ſleep in a
" whole ſkin, than acquire fame at the
" hazard of his precious life; dont let
" us then waſte *our* precious moments
" on ſo inſignificant an object. Let
" me aſk you when I ſhall have the felicity of hearing from you; and ſuffer me to repeat, that it is my intention to introduce my uncle to you
" the inſtant he comes to London,
" which, I expect, will be about the
" time you will return with Sir Edward's family to town. In the mean
" time I ſhall go to Cambridge with
" Frederick, and there remain quietly
" till the propitious moment arrives.

" But

"But I cannot be content, my beloved "friend, without receiving conſtantly "from your pen, a circumſtantial hiſ-"tory of all your proceedings. Pro-"miſe me that I may depend on your "punctuality; for I ſhall not admit of "any excuſe. Earlier in our acquaint-"ance, I was too modeſt to preſs this "ſubject; but now I warn you to expect "no ſuch patient acquieſcence."

"If you admit no excuſe," replied Edelfrida, ſmiling, "it were uſeleſs for "me to attempt making any. Indeed, "I ſee you are reſolved to have every "thing your own way. I believe it is "ever thus. We poor weak women "are obliged to own our inferiority in "all things; for whether in ſorrow, in "anger, or in joy, ſtill you aſſert your "prerogative as lords of the creation; "ſo that you only leave us the choice "of ſubmiſſion, with a bad or a good "grace."

"Well, ſince you acknowledge our "right,"

"right," said he, laughing, "and con-
"fess there is no alternative, wisely
"resolve to choose the good grace, and
"trust to my generosity not to abuse
"your confidence."

"There is something very cow-
"ardly," returned she, "in yielding
"you the victory on so slight a con-
"test; but I believe I may as well save
"my credit at once, by consenting to
"your proposal; therefore give me
"your address; and when I am in the
"humour, and have nothing else to do,
"perhaps I may just inform you that I
"am alive."

While Mr. Henry Evelyne and Edelfrida were thus engaged, Mr. Evelyne took care to occupy Miss Miller's attention so entirely, that she knew nothing of what passed, except between herself and him; and Mr. Miller, who came merely to eat his breakfast, no sooner finished it, than he retired again.

The morning insensibly passed away.

The

The clock ſtruck eleven; and Edelfrida expected the carriage every moment to convey her to St. James's-ſquare. At length it came. She then ſent to beg Mr. Miller would allow her to take leave of him, and thank him for the attention ſhe had experienced in his houſe.

While this meſſage was carrying to him in his counting-houſe, Miſs Miller was overwhelming her with profeſſions of friendſhip, and lamenting her departure; while the dejected Henry gazed in ſilence on her beauteous face; a ſilence more expreſſive of his feelings, than any language.

Mr. Miller came and received her acknowledgments with his accuſtomed gravity; wiſhed her a good journey, and deſired his reſpects might be preſented to Sir Edward and the family at Dudley-park; then bowed, and left it to the younger gentlemen to conduct her to the carriage, which, when ſhe had

had taken a graceful leave of Miſs Miller, they did, whiſpering as they went a thouſand tender, friendly things in her ear.

She got into the coach with a heavy heart; but when the door was ſhut, it was ſome minutes ere Mr. Henry Evelyne, who leaned over it, would ſuffer the carriage to move, till at length, obſerving ſhe was diſtreſſed even to tears by his tenderneſs, he preſſed her hand to his lips, and breathed out a laſt adieu. She kiſſed her hand to both brothers, and the next moment found herſelf moving towards her uncle's houſe with no very lively ſenſations.

The two gentlemen juſt returned into Mr. Miller's houſe to take a handſome leave of Miſs Miller, who ſaw Mr. Evelyne depart with extreme reluctance; but Edelfrida being gone, they had no longer any motive for remaining in the city.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER a melancholy ride, Edelfrida found herſelf at the door of Sir Edward Dudley's houſe in St. James's-ſquare, where ſhe alighted, not with the alacrity natural to her; her heart was oppreſſed, and her movements ſlow. She had not time, however, for much reflection; for ſcarcely had ſhe got into the hall, ere Miſs Dudley met her.

There was ſomething very engaging in this young lady's manner and addreſs; and the kind attention ſhe ſhewed on this occaſion, was particularly grateful to Edelfrida.

Miſs Dudley welcomed her couſin with the eaſy and friendly air of an old acquaintance, and conducted her to her own dreſſing-room, where ſhe again ex-

expreſſed the pleaſure ſhe looked forward to in her ſociety.

Edelfrida was affected by this delicate reſpect for her ſituation; and from that moment felt a growing partiality for the amiable Maria.

They then talked of the time which had elapſed ſince Edelfrida arrived in England, of Lady Wilford's recovery, and their friends at Dudley-park; and throughout all the converſation, Miſs Dudley diſplayed a mildneſs of diſpoſition, and a ſenſibility, which charmed the young and feeling Edelfrida, who already acknowledged her as her friend, and in all the ardour of her diſpoſition, already longed for the time when ſhe might talk to her of Mr. Henry Evelyne, and repoſe full confidence in her.

When they had ſpent about an hour together, equally pleaſed with each other, Miſs Dudley ſaid, "Perhaps "you'll have no objection to go ſhop-

"ping

"ping with me; I have a thouſand
"commiſſions to execute at the milliners
"for my ſiſter and Miſs Wilford, and
"ſome few for myſelf."

"Not the leaſt objection," replied Edelfrida, "it will be a great amuſe-
"ment to me, who am ſo entirely new
"to every thing of the ſort."

"Then it muſt be my buſineſs to
"inſtruct you in theſe neceſſary ac-
"compliſhments for a fine lady;" returned Miſs Dudley, ſmiling.

"You'll find your pupil very dull,
"I fear;" ſaid Edelfrida.

"I never ſaw any perſon whoſe ap-
"pearance promiſed ſo little," replied Miſs Dudley; "but, my dear, though
"you look ſo ſtupid, I will not deſpair."

The coachman having received orders to put a pair of horſes to the coach, Miſs Dudley having come to town with four, a ſervant now came to ſay the carriage was ready; the two couſins then ſallied forth in queſt of

faſhions,

faſhions, a ſearch in which they ſpent the whole morning. Edelfrida, at every turning, hoping to catch a glimpſe of the two friends ſhe had ſo lately parted from; Miſs Dudley obſerved her eye anxiouſly directed to the coach window, and at length, with an arch ſmile, ſaid:

"Pray, my ſweet couſin, why do you "examine ſo minutely, with thoſe "ſpeaking eyes of yours, every object "we paſs?"

Edelfrida coloured from a conſciouſneſs that ſhe was really occupied by what paſſed in the ſtreet; from a cauſe ſhe could not reveal; and this emotion raiſed Miſs Dudley's curioſity; ſhe however parried the queſtion, by ſaying, the conſtant moving ſcene engaged her attention inſenſibly.

"I muſt be content with that anſwer "for the preſent," returned her couſin with a ſmile of incredulity, which ſtill heightened the glow on Edelfrida's cheek;

cheek; and the coach juſt then turning down St. James's-ſtreet, the two Mr. Evelynes, arm in arm, were the firſt objects that met her eye; the pleaſure and confuſion her countenance expreſſed, pointing them out to Miſs Dudley as the occaſion of it; they bowed too—but it was not the bow of ceremony, evidently; both of them, particularly the younger brother, gazed on Edelfrida with that unequivocal language of the eye, which at once admits a third perſon into the ſecret.

"Thoſe gentlemen appear as much "ſtruck with ſomething in or about "this carriage," ſaid Miſs Dudley, "as you are, my dear couſin, by the "moving objects in the ſtreet; I dont "know them—do you?"

"A little," replied Edelfrida in a heſitating manner, "they came in the "ſame pacquet from Calais with me."

"And is that all," cried Miſs Dudley, "ah! Edelfrida, never pretend to

"keep

"keep a ſecret, while your countenance
"is ſuch a traitor to your purpoſe;
"and alſo tell your friends from me,
"particularly the one with dark eyes;
"that ſo long as you chuſe to paſs only
"for common acquaintance, he muſt
"teach thoſe harbingers of his thoughts
"to counterfeit a different language
"and expreſſion, or a mere novice in-
"deed, ſuch as I am, will read his
"meaning."

"Suppoſing," replied Edelfrida, "I
"granted *that* to be real which you in-
"fer, from your ſkill in reading the
"countenance, which take notice I
"do not, I can by no means believe
"that I have to deal with a mere no-
"vice; on the contrary, I conclude that
"you are well practiſed in the art itſelf,
"or you would not be ſo quickſighted
"in diſcovering what you imagine to
"be ſymptoms of it."

"Nay, if you deny the charge,"
ſaid Miſs Dudley, laughing, "you
"contradict

"contradict your own assertion; for if "I were practised in the art, as you "term it, I could not mistake the "symptoms."

"I find," cried Edelfrida, "that I "shall only puzzle the cause, so that I "will only assure you, your penetration "has for once deceived you."

"That it frequently does," replied Miss Dudley, "though in the present "case, I feel a good deal of confidence "in my own judgment; forgive me "for calling your veracity in question, "and I will confess, that as yet, I have "no right to your confidence; if at any "future day you should think me wor-"thy of it, that will be the time to de-"termine whether I am right or wrong "in my present conjecture."

"I am already confident," said Edel-frida, "that I shall find you worthy of "my warmest esteem; and you will "hereafter, I hope, not find me un-"grateful,

" grateful for any intereſt you kindly
" take in my affairs."

" Your readineſs to accept me for
" your friend," returned Miſs Dudley,
" calls upon me to merit the title, and
" ſince we are ſo well diſpoſed towards
" each other, I truſt we ſhall meet with
" nothing to impede our progreſs to a
" very ſpeedy and a very perfect friend-
" ſhip."

" I ſincerely join in the wiſh," ſaid Edelfrida.

They were then ſet down at a houſe where Miſs Dudley had ſome buſineſs, and ſo the converſation ended. They afterwards returned to St. James's-ſquare to dinner, where they found Mr. Dudley impatiently waiting their arrival. Edelfrida was then introduced to him in form, by his ſiſter; and ſhe received from him every mark of polite attention, and every ſign of approbation, their very late acquaintance would permit. Mr. Dudley was about five

and twenty, agreeable in his perſon, and genteel in his addreſs; he was rather cheerful than lively, and like his ſiſter, very mild in his temper; his underſtanding was neither ſuperior nor deficient; his diſpoſitions were all good; his acquirements many; and his heart feeling and benevolent.

Such was the relation to whom Edelfrida was preſented. Her figure was too ſtriking not to engage his attention, which the tone of her voice and every look, contributed to ſecure.

They ſat down to dinner at a late hour; and Miſs Dudley apologized to Edelfrida for the indifferent ſtile in which they were ſerved, owing to there being but one woman ſervant, her own maid (who came to town with her) excepted, in the houſe. In this reſpect, however, Edelfrida was eaſily pleaſed, and the remainder of the day was ſpent in the moſt calm and ſocial manner.

If Mr. Dudley was delighted with

the first view of his beauteous cousin, that delight was greatly augmented, ere the day closed and she retired.

The grace which accompanied every word she uttered, which though, perhaps, trifling in itself, rendered it interesting to her hearers, the happy variety of her countenance, and the artless stile of her expression, charmed him; and he secretly rejoiced, to attend her next day into the country, where he should have ample leisure to contemplate her character.

At night, each retired to their respective apartments with the most favourable impression of the other; and the next morning they began their intended journey to Dudley Park, which place they were to reach in the evening of that day. Edelfrida bade London adieu, with no other regret than that of leaving Mr. Henry Evelyne behind her; her companions were pleasing and agreeable, and particularly attentive to her,

her, but yet there was a void in her breaſt which the abſent Henry could alone fill up; while ſhe was thus devoting her thoughts to another, Mr. Dudley was taking large draughts of that paſſion which frequently determines the happineſs or miſery of this life, though more frequently it is made the plaything of a few weeks or months, and like other toys, at length thrown aſide. Few there are, and but few inſtances of to its proving fatal to its votaries, and the preſent age ſeems wiſely determined to laugh at Love and his arts.— Mr. Dudley was, however not one of thoſe wiſe men, but, fearleſs of danger, he purſued it, by making the company and converſation of Edelfrida his chief pleaſure, and thus early as the ſecond day of their knowing each other perſonally, he laid unwittingly, the foundation of much future regret.

As they approached Dudley Park, Edelfrida began again to feel thoſe apprehenſions which had filled her mind concerning the reception ſhe ſhould meet with from her uncle and Lady Dudley. Thus far ſhe had been fortunate, but ſhe ſcarcely dared hope the relations ſhe was about to be introduced to, were as amiable as thoſe ſhe already knew; in conſequence of this fear, her ſpirits ſunk; and the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained ſo early in life, by the death of her father, forced the tears into her eyes; it was, however, near dark, ſo that ſhe could, unperceived, indulge her melancholy. Miſs Dudley's maid was in the coach, therefore nothing could paſs except general converſation.

At length the carriage entered the Park gate, and Mr. and Miſs Dudley, both welcomed Edelfrida, with the moſt flattering expreſſions of pleaſure and regard.

regard. She received them with gratitude, but had ſcarcely time to ſpeak, ere they were at the door of the houſe.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. DUDLEY aſſiſted Edelfrida and his ſiſter to alight; then taking the hand of the former, he led her into the drawing-room, where Sir Edward and Lady Dudley were playing at piquet.

Sir Edward, however, laid down his cards immediately, and advancing towards his niece, embraced her, and ſaid, "he was happy to ſee her at Dudley-park."

Edelfrida courteſeyed in ſilence.

Her uncle then took her hand from his ſon, and brought her up to Lady Dudley, who had not condeſcended to riſe from her chair; ſhe, however, bent forward, and touched Edelfrida's cheek with her lips, welcoming her with a cold formality.

Edelfrida was ſhocked, and ſhrank from

from an addreſs ſo little conſonant to the warmth of her own feelings: ſhe returned it with a reſpectful movement only; then retired from the ſpot where ſhe received it, to ſeek comfort in the open countenance of Miſs Dudley.

Mr. Dudley, ſhe quickly ſaw, was mortified by his mother's hauteur, and endeavoured to make his lovely couſin forget it, by an attention the moſt pointed; which did not, however, reſtore good humour to Lady Dudley, whoſe brow was more and more contracted by every token of her ſon's politeneſs to Edelfrida.

Mean while Miſs Dudley, having paid her duty to her mother, was giving her father an account of ſome commiſſions he had charged her with.

Lady Dudley examined Edelfrida's perſon and features with the moſt exact attention; but the ſurvey did not appear to pleaſe her.

Sir Edward looked at her with leſs

haughtineſs, enquired about her journey to England with ſome ſhow of kindneſs, and hoped ſhe would have no cauſe to regret being in future one of his family.

Edelfrida bowed gracefully, and replied, "that ſhe was convinced it muſt be her own fault, if any occaſion of regret aroſe."

"Your father," ſaid Sir Edward, "has committed you to my guardian-"ſhip; which proves that, whatever "were the ſentiments he for many years "entertained of me, his confidence in "my integrity was not deſtroyed by "them. I hope you will follow his "example in this inſtance, by confid-"ing in me. A girl of your age may "be ſuppoſed to want an adviſer; and "both duty and inclination will direct "me to ſupply the place of a father to "you."

"You may depend, Sir, upon being "conſidered in that light by me," ſaid

Edel-

Edelfrida; "it is my moſt anxious "hope to fulfil every wiſh of my be- "loved father; and it ſhall ever be my "ſtudy to merit your protection."

"I hope, Ma'am," ſaid Lady Dud- ley, fixing her eyes upon Edelfrida's face, "that you will carefully preſerve "this diſpoſition; for which purpoſe, "it will be proper that you ſhould al- "ways recollect the tax it is upon Sir "Edward to ſuperintend the conduct "of other peoples' children; it is an "office not often repaid with the grati- "tude it deſerves, conſidering the trou- "ble that attends it."

"I am very ſenſible," replied Edel- frida, with emotion, "of the obliga- "tions I am under to my uncle and "your ladyſhip, for extending your "favor to one ſo deſtitute as I am of "friends; and I think I ſhall never "forget, while I live, any tokens of "kindneſs and friendſhip I may be "happy enough to receive."

"This is a diſtreſſing ſubject to all "parties," ſaid Mr. Dudley. "I will "pledge myſelf for the preſervation of "harmony on my couſin's part; and "you, Sir, and you, Ma'am," turning from his father to his mother, "will, I "am ſure, be happy to render her "ſituation amongſt us as pleaſant as "poſſible. From this time, then, let "our actions ſpeak for us."

"You're right, Edward," ſaid his father; "I approve your propoſal, and "agree to it."

"You are very ready, Sir," replied Lady Dudley to her ſon, "to anſwer "for other people. I hope you may "never have reaſon to repent your "haſty judgments."

This ſpeech was accompanied with a ſneer; but, as no further notice was taken, the ſubject dropt; and Edelfrida was, for that time, relieved from the diſtreſs it had occaſioned her, though ſhe was, by no means, eaſy at the idea of

of ſpending even a part of her life under the roof with a woman of lady Dudley's character. She now, more than ever, thought Mr. Henry Evelyne's attachment the greateſt bleſſing ſhe could poſſeſs, as it offered her not only happineſs in itſelf, but an aſylum from all the diſagreeable circumſtances attending her preſent abode.

Supper being announced ſoon after the foregoing converſation, they took their places at the table with thoſe ſenſations what had paſſed would naturally produce.

Mr. Dudley took a chair next Edelfrida's; and the reſt of the evening went off tolerably well.

When Edelfrida retired for that night to her own apartment, ſhe could not but reflect with pain on the conſtraint ſhe muſt neceſſarily put on her feelings to render her reſidence at Dudley-park ſupportable in any degree. She at once perceived, that Lady Dud-

ley was the ſpring which moved the family.

Sir Edward, whoſe temper was too quiet for contention, was now, from long habit, directed in all things by his wife, on whoſe opinion he formed his own, without ever diſputing the propriety of it.

They were both ambitious, proud, and fond of money; but, added to theſe unamiable qualities, Lady Dudley was unfeeling, imperious, and revengeful.

With ſuch a woman, the daughter of a man ſhe hated, and who was in a great meaſure dependant on her, had little chance of enjoying any happineſs within the circle of her power. Indeed her own children, particularly Miſs Dudley, too frequently felt the effects of her diſpleaſure, which was ſo much the offspring of violence and caprice, that it was wholly impoſſible to guard againſt it.

Mr.

Mr. Dudley was her favorite; but he found it no eaſy matter to eſcape, at all times, the influence of her anger, which the ſlighteſt contradiction of her ſovereign will never failed to create.

Lady Wilford, the only one of her couſins Edelfrida had not now ſeen, was the counterpart of her mother, with the addition of an inordinate ſhare of perſonal vanity, which age had deſtroyed in Lady Dudley.

This young lady had married Sir James Wilford, not becauſe ſhe had any affection for him, but becauſe his fortune promiſed her the gratification of her wiſhes; which were, to live in the firſt ſtyle of elegance, to adorn her perſon with every ornament that faſhion could point out, and to move in the round of diſſipation without ceaſing; and ſhe was not diſappointed in her expectations:——

Sir James was a good-natured, inſignificant man, prepoſſeſſed with an high

high idea of his lady's ſuperior underſtanding, and of too feeble a mind to judge for himſelf, to diſcover any faults in her conduct, or, diſcovering, to attempt a regulation.

Theſe were the relations Edelfrida was yet to be introduced to; but they lived at too great a diſtance from Dudley-park, to afford them an opportunity of viſiting each other very frequently.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning, when Edelfrida entered the breakfaſt-room, ſhe was rejoiced to hear from Miſs Dudley, that her mother never left her room till near dinner time, which, while they were in the country, was at an earlier hour than when they were in town, where her ladyſhip ſometimes ventured out in her carriage in the mornings, and dedicated the evenings to the card-table.

Sir Edward, Mr. and Miſs Dudley, with Edelfrida, then ſat down to breakfaſt; and all of them feeling leſs conſtrained in the abſence of Lady Dudley, there was an eaſe and ſociability, which preſiding ſolely at this meal, every one ſeemed particularly to enjoy it.

Sir Edward addreſſed his niece with an affability and good humour, which convinced

convinced her his diſpoſitions towards her were kind; and ſhe therefore forgave him in her own mind for the reſerve he maintained the reſt of the day.

After breakfaſt, as the morning was clear and fine, Mr. Dudley propoſed to accompany his fair couſin and his ſiſter in a walk, in order to ſhew the former the beauties of a ſituation which ſhe was to conſider as her home for the time to come.

Sir Edward, as was his cuſtom, retired to his own parlour, or ſtudy, and afterwards rode out by himſelf to overlook any improvement that might be making about his grounds.

Edelfrida then, and her two couſins, ſallied forth, each of the ladies taking an arm of Mr. Dudley.

This little party harmoniouſly purſued their way through a plantation in the park, which every now and then opened a view to the neighbouring country,

country, and diverſified the ſcene ſo as never to fatigue the eye.

The ſeaſon of the year was, however, unfavorable to the natural beauties which encompaſſed Dudley-park: the leaves were all falling; the landſcape was become dreary; and every thing wore the face of decay.—A fine ſubject for the moraliſt to expatiate upon.

Mr. Dudley, whoſe temper fitted him not for the more active pleaſures of the world, had frequently indulged himſelf with forming in idea a ſyſtem of felicity which he had as yet no immediate proſpect of realizing; it was to be founded on rational principles; but as it required the concurrence of a ſecond perſon at leaſt, like all ideal ſchemes, it was likely to end in the brain where it began:——

He wiſhed to ſpend the greateſt part of the year in the country, if not all of it; —and he hoped to find (though he had hitherto fought her in vain) a companion

panion of a diſpoſition ſimilar to his own, fond of domeſtic enjoyments, pleaſed with retirement, not ſolitude, and poſſeſſed of virtues to preſerve that harmony without which life would be to him a burden, and the oppoſite of which, his own family furniſhed him with a fearful example. Neither avarice nor ambition tinctured his mind; he therefore did not make fortune a neceſſary ingredient in his choice of a wife.

Heaven then appeared to him to have thrown Edelfrida in his way on purpoſe for the accompliſhment of his deſign.

Her perſon was lovely; and he was an admirer of beauty; her manners were gentle; her ſenſibility even extreme: two things which rendered a woman peculiarly attractive to him.

Traverſing his paternal grounds with her by his ſide, his imagination at once finiſhed the picture; and he fondly believed, that time only was wanting to com-

complete his long reflected plan of happineſs.

In their walk, he made choice of more ſerious ſubjects for converſation than men of his age in general ſelect to entertain a youthful beauty with.—But he wanted to diſcover the bent of her inclinations, and the depth of her underſtanding, if poſſible; for though her countenance was all intelligence, it ſometimes happens that it is no true index to the ſoul.

Edelfrida was, however, bleſt with more than a competent ſhare of ſenſe, though a daſh of levity, which Nature had thrown into the compoſition of her mind, together with an acute feeling, the influence of which deſtroyed her better judgment, united with the latter quality to render her actions frequently cenſurable. Her heart was, however, excellent; and the candor with which ſhe acknowledged her faults in ſome ſort excuſed them; and the conſtancy

with

with which she laboured to repair them made her truly respectable. So that, upon the whole, she was a woman so superior to the generality of her sex, that to be intimately acquainted with her character and not love her, was impossible.

This was Mr. Dudley's opinion ere they returned from their walk; for Edelfrida falling into his humour, had exhibited a solidity which was not always observable in her conversation.

They got back in time to dress for dinner. The morning had insensibly disappeared; so pleased were they all with their ramble.

Edelfrida's dress did not occupy, as yet, much of her time:—Her hair was unpowdered, and her gown so fashioned as to require but little trouble in putting on; yet, simple as its construction was, it served to shew her person to advantage; and had her complexion wanted any aid from art, the sable hue

of

of her garment was admirably calculated to afford it, by its contraſt;—but that was unneceſſary:—The delicacy of her ſkin was ſo happily blended with the glow of health, that nothing could exceed its brilliancy; conſequently, nothing could add to it.

Thus attired in native lovelineſs ſhe entered the drawing-room alone, and found it empty. She therefore ſat down to a harpſichord which ſtood at the farther end, intending to amuſe herſelf till ſome perſon ſhould appear. Her back was to the door; ſhe therefore heard not Mr. Dudley enter, who, that he might not interrupt her, and deprive himſelf of liſtening to the thrilling tones of her harmonious voice, gently ſtole behind her chair, where, unobſerved, he enjoyed himſelf.

Miſs Dudley came next; but beginning to ſpeak at the door ere ſhe heard the muſic, Edelfrida, on turning to reply

ply to her, diſcovered Mr. Dudley, and quite ſtarted from the ſudden ſurpriſe.

"I hope you are not alarmed by the "ſight of me," he ſaid, gently taking hold of her hand. "'Tis my hope "and wiſh to inſpire very different "ſenſations in the boſom of my beau-"teous couſin."

"The alarm was momentary," replied ſhe, ſmiling, "I did not know "you were in the room; or I ſhould "have felt pleaſure rather than fear, "from your preſence."

"How flattering is that expreſſion!" returned he.

"'Tis true, I aſſure you," ſaid Edelfrida, artleſsly.

"Which ſtamps it with ineſtimable "value!" exclaimed Mr. Dudley, with unuſual animation.

"Edward," cried Miſs Dudley, with an arch ſmile, "beware of kindling a "flame which will conſume you. Truſt "me, the object of your adoration is

"an

"an heartleſs one, and can never af-
"ford you the reward you ſue for, or
"I am greatly miſtaken."

Mr. Dudley fixed his eyes upon Edelfrida's face; ſhe bluſhed, and caſt down hers.

"Is it true?" ſaid he, in a ſoftened tone of voice; "is it indeed true, that "the lovely Edelfrida has left ſo valu-
"able a part of herſelf behind her?
"and can it be poſſible, that the happy
"mortal with whom the jewel is depo-
"ſited, ſhould expoſe the better half of
"his treaſure to the wayward events of
"chance, unprotected by his preſence?
"Oh! Heavens, had I been ſo bleſſed,
"no conſideration, however weighty,
"ſhould have torn you from me to
"perform a long and hazardous jour-
"ney by yourſelf; and as it is, had I
"known that you had travelled only
"with a ſervant through France to this
"country, I would have flown to offer
"you my ſervices."

"You

"You are very good," replied Edelfrida; "and I am not less obliged by "the inclination, than I should have "been had you really put it in practice. "But as to Miss Dudley's insinuation, "it is merely the offspring of her own "inventive imagination."

"Well, well, Edelfrida," replied her cousin, "take care that I am not "revenged upon you for this duplicity "some day or other; and if Edward is "wise, he will take warning by my "caution, and not let you make un-"merciful havock in his heart."

"Mr. Dudley," said Edelfrida, "has "very little to fear from me, I believe; "I have formed no such evil designs "against him, I give you my word."

Mr. Dudley appeared thoughtful; and ere he could reply to Edelfrida's last speech, Sir Edward and her ladyship entered the room.

To the latter Edelfrida now paid her respects

reſpects, it being their firſt meeting that day.

Lady Dudley returned them, as before, with a cold formality; then ſeating herſelf on a ſopha by the fire, enquired of her ſon what he had done with himſelf all the morning.

"I have had the pleaſure," returned he, "of walking with theſe two ladies;" moving to Edelfrida and his ſiſter.

"You uſed to ride in a morning, I "thought," ſaid her ladyſhip, croſsly; "what is the fancy of leaving that cuſ- "tom off, pray? it's much better for "your health, I am ſure, than ſtrolling "about with theſe girls."

"My health," replied he, mildly, "is ſo perfectly eſtabliſhed, that I ven- "ture to follow the lead of inclination "ſometimes, and prefer a ſociable walk "to a ſolitary ride."

Dinner was announced at that moment; and they all walked ſilently into the dining parlour, her ladyſhip

placing herſelf at the head of the table in no very amiable humour.

In the evening a card party was formed by Sir Edward, his ſon, and daughter, to gratify Lady Dudley's paſſion for that amuſement.

As to Edelfrida, ſhe was ſo totally ignorant of every game, that ſhe could not engage, therefore took her work, and ſeated herſelf at the corner of the table.

A few general obſervations compriſed the whole of the converſation for the reſt of the day; for when Lady Dudley was preſent, every one ſeemed fearful of ſtarting any ſubject, leſt it ſhould lead to thoſe ſevere reflections ſhe beſtowed on the generality of things and of people; and by this means ſhe preſerved an abſolute ſway over her family, who conſequently rather dreaded than loved her.

CHAPTER XIII.

MANY days had now elapſed ſince Edelfrida became an inhabitant of Dudley-park; and ſhe had as yet heard nothing of Mr. Henry Evelyne, who had agreed with her, that he ſhould write as ſoon as he got to Cambridge.

Every thing continued to wear the ſame face in the Dudley family: Her ladyſhip preſerved her reſerve; Sir Edward did the ſame when ſhe was preſent; Mr. Dudley ſtill ſought and enjoyed the company and converſation of his couſin; and Miſs Dudley and ſhe inſenſibly became friends, in the true and literal meaning of the term.

Edelfrida had not, however, ventured on diſcloſing any ſecrets to the amiable Maria; ſhe feared her raillery, and could not bring herſelf to talk with compoſure on a ſubject ſo near her

heart; a ſubject which now began to make her reſtleſs and uneaſy, having heard nothing from the object of her hopes and wiſhes.

In this anxious ſtate of mind, day after day paſſed, and ſhe was beginning to reſign herſelf to deſpair, when, one morning, a letter was brought to her ere ſhe was out of her room. She trembled with impatience as ſhe broke the ſeal, and read the contents with no ſmall emotion, though they were little more than a repetition of what the ardent, animated Henry had already aſſured her of more than once. Her anxiety was, however, removed, and ſhe prepared herſelf to appear at breakfaſt with a lighter heart than ſhe had felt for ſome time before.

Mr. Dudley, ever attentive to her looks, perceived the alteration the inſtant ſhe entered the room; but knowing not the cauſe for it, he flattered himſelf, that her gravity which he had

alſo

alſo remarked, was the effect of chance, and, that ſince ſhe appeared ſo happy in a ſituation where, he felt, ſhe had many vexatious things to encounter, he was himſelf perhaps not diſagreeable to her, and might be one cauſe of reconciling her mind to the daily unpleaſant occurrences created by the violence of his mother's temper. Thus are we ever prone to believe what we wiſh; and thus do we too frequently lead ourſelves into a labyrinth of error, to extricate us from which it is no eaſy matter to find a proper clue.

It was now above a month ſince Edelfrida left Mr. Miller's houſe in London; and during that time ſhe had heard and written twice to Mr. Henry Evelyne.

She had made very little progreſs in enlarging her acquaintance. There were but few neighbours near Dudley-park; and thoſe few were kept at home by the weather and other accidental cauſes; ſo that, in general, they were a family

party; when, about the beginning of December, Lady Wilford wrote, to desire her ſiſter would bring Edelfrida to Wilford-lodge, as it was not in her power to come to Dudley-park before ſhe went to town for the winter.

No objection being made to this ſcheme by Sir Edward or my Lady, Mr. Dudley determined to be of the party, and in the courſe of a day or two after the letter was received, they ſet out.

During the ride there, Mr. Dudley failed not to take advantage of the moments that were rendered favourable by the abſence of his mother, whoſe prying eye ſeemed to ſearch the inmoſt receſſes of his heart, in order to diſcover if any diſgraceful partiality lurked there for his poor dependant couſin.

He had obſerved this ſcrutinizing attention, and, too well knowing Lady Dudley's temper, had endeavoured, in her preſence, to treat Edelfrida with the eaſy familiarity of a friend only.

It was time he meditated a connexion with her, which would give him a legal title to intereſt himſelf in her happineſs openly; and he only waited a fortunate period to avow that intention to his father, from whom he did not fear much oppoſition, provided he could firſt gain over his mother; and if tenderneſs for any object in this world could move her to yield up her more ambitious views, he knew it was himſelf, for whom ſhe made no ſcruple of expreſſing, on all occaſions, her peculiar fondneſs.

He found, however, that policy demanded the utmoſt circumſpection and addreſs in this buſineſs; he therefore reſolved to proceed with the moſt guarded caution, in order to ſecure, in the end, the accompliſhment of his wiſhes.

In the mean time, he ſeized every opportunity of making what progreſs he could in the favour of Edelfrida, whoſe frank and guileleſs manners

ſometimes ſlattered him, that he was not diſagreeable to her.

On her part, as ſhe had no deſign upon Mr. Dudley's heart, ſhe was not minute in her obſervations on his conduct towards her; but really thought what he wiſhed his mother to believe for the preſent, that he regarded her as a ſiſter.

With this idea Edelfrida enjoyed his converſation, and was always pleaſed with his preſence. By this means, unwarily did ſhe plant a thorn in his boſom, which imbittered many of his days. The time, however, was not yet come for that eclairciſſement which was alone to reveal the principles on which each party acted.

Mr. Dudley choſe to drive his phaeton to Wilford-lodge, though the weather was cold, that he might have the pleaſure of Edelfrida's company part of the way at leaſt.

Miſs Dudley and her maid went in the

the chaiſe; but, to ſave appearances, ſhe ſometimes changed, for a mile or two, with her couſin.

In this manner they reached the end of their little journey about ſix in the evening, chuſing rather to dine on the road, than hurry themſelves to get in at the dinner hour at Wilford-lodge.

Edelfrida, who knew nothing of Lady Wilford's character, was in high ſpirits all the way: Having eſcaped the conſtraint of Lady Dudley's preſence, and taking her two friends along with her, ſhe was convinced the change muſt prove a pleaſant one.

When the evening came on, ſhe left Mr. Dudley to drive himſelf, and got into the carriage to Miſs Dudley; and in this order they arrived at Sir James Wilford's, the inſide of whoſe houſe preſented to Edelfrida a ſtyle of magnificence which proclaimed the taſte of its owners.

Mr. Dudley led her forward through

a range of elegant apartments, the firſt of which was almoſt lined with footmen in ſuperb liveries, ſome of whom preceded them into their lady's dreſſing-room, where a ſmall party were engaged at cards.

Ere they reached this room Sir James met them, and was introduced to his new couſin.

Edelfrida, whoſe ideas were tinctured with romance, was ſurpriſed to behold the huſband of Lady Wilford, in appearance, ſo little agreeable, or even genteel.

Her ſtandard of manly beauty was Mr. Henry Evelyne; and between him and Sir James Wilford, there was indeed little reſemblance.

But, ever rapid in her concluſions, ſhe immediately ſuppoſed, that though the latter gentleman wanted perſonal attractions, and was even deficient in addreſs and gracefulneſs, that he poſſeſſed qualities which, upon an intimate acquaintance,

quaintance, made amends for the abſence of theſe extrinſic endowments; for it never occurred to her, that his fortune alone could have rendered him acceptable to her couſin, who was not in a ſituation to be tempted by mercenary motives. She therefore, on the firſt view, gave Sir James credit for what he did not, alas! poſſeſs.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDELFRIDA now advanced into the room, where, ſeated on a ſopha, ſhe beheld Lady Wilford, who roſe up to receive her with an air of condeſcending kindneſs, the dictate of a proud ſoul. Edelfrida, however, accuſtomed to believe things what they appeared, accepted this ſhew of regard, and repaid it from her heart. Lady Wilford then preſented her to Miſs Wilford, a young lady of no very promiſing aſpect; ſhort in ſtature, clumſy, and ill made in her perſon, with a broad face, a flat noſe, and light grey eyes, whoſe expreſſion was that of ill nature and malice.—She was moſt whimſically dreſſed, and ridiculouſly affected in her manners. When the ceremony of this introduction was over, a gentleman, who ſat by Lady Wilford on the ſopha, ſtepped up to her,

her, and begged ſhe would do him the honour to introduce him to her lovely relation. There was ſomething of grimace in his manner, and ſomething (in Edelfrida's idea) ſo odd in his whole perſon and appearance, that ſhe could ſcarcely avoid laughing, while ſhe curtſied to him.

When they were all ſeated, Mr. Martin (for by that name Lady Wilford preſented him to her), with all imaginable eaſe, ſurveyed her features through a glaſs, which hung to his button. He then whiſpered his neighbour, with an air of importance.—Tea ſoon after being brought in, Edelfrida was relieved a little from the examination of the whole party, who ſeemed to copy Mr. Martin. When the ſervants retired again, Lady Wilford propoſed to her to play at cards, but ſhe excuſed herſelf by pleading ignorance. They then forced Mr. Dudley to take Sir James's place, and he ſat down to whiſt, with

Miſs

Miſs Wilford for his partner, againſt her ladyſhip and Mr. Martin. Lady Wilford making room for Edelfrida to ſit next her, between the deals, entered into converſation, with a complacent ſmile on her countenance.

Edelfrida, however, though by no means prone to make ill natured obſervations on any one, could not help wondering to find the amiable Maria Dudley's ſiſter ſo much the reverſe of herſelf. Beſides ſhe had often heard, when a child, ere ſhe left England with her father, that Miſs Dudley was a woman greatly admired and much ſpoken of by the men: But how could ſhe think it poſſible that a perſon, large and deſtitute of all ſymmetry, a complexion naturally fair indeed, but now florid even to coarſeneſs; prominent eyes, without luſtre or ſoftneſs; an ill ſhaped noſe, and a wide mouth—how could ſhe ſuppoſe that a female of this deſcription could ever have had any pretenſions

to

to beauty? While, on the contrary, Maria, of whoſe perſonal endowments nothing was ſaid, poſſeſſed many more requiſites than her ſiſter towards making her handſome. She was tall, ſlender, and elegant, with a prepoſſeſſing countenance, and eyes which ſpoke the gentleneſs of her temper. During the rubber, Mr. Dudley was ſo taken up with contemplating the fair object which was juſt in his view, that he made ſeveral miſtakes in the game, which Miſs Wilford obſerved, with much acrimony in her manner, ſeemingly not much delighted with the homage both gentlemen ſilently paid to Edelfrida.

At ſupper, Mr. Martin placed himſelf on one ſide the fair ſtranger, Mr Dudley on the other, leaving Miſs Dudley and Miſs Wilford to ſeat themſelves on the other ſide the table. Mr. Martin was officiouſly civil to Edelfrida, recommending to her ſeveral diſhes, as being perfectly acquainted with their excel-

lencies;

lencies; and expatiating on them with the ſort of eloquence to be expected from the cook, or, perhaps more properly, in the language of a voluptuary. When the cloth was removed, he affected to diſplay his wit on ſeveral ſubjects, and ſucceeded equally well on all, convincing ſuch as would be convinced that he had a plentiful lack of it.

In the midſt of his moſt entertaining diſcourſe, he took frequent occaſion to whiſper in Edelfrida's ear, how much the bright luſtre of her eyes had pierced him; that he was in extacy when ſhe condeſcended to beſtow one of her bewitching ſmiles on him, and a number of other ſpeeches in the ſame ſtrain, which appeared to her ſo ſingularly abſurd, that ſhe concluded he was ſlighty. Meanwhile Mr. Dudley, knowing the man, gueſſed the ſort of language he would addreſs to what he ſuppoſed an inexperienced girl, and he watched Edelfrida's

frida's countenance to diſcover how ſhe received it. He ſoon ſaw that it was with difficulty ſhe preſerved her compoſure, which ſhe was frequently on the point of loſing in a fit of laughter. When they retired to bed, Miſs Dudley went with Edelfrida into her room, where ſhe diverted herſelf at Mr. Martin's expence.

"I ſee," ſaid ſhe, "you have charmed the Nabob; but I would not have "you flatter yourſelf that he will be an "eaſy conqueſt, for he has no ſmall "ſhare of ſelf-complacency, and a "monſtrous fortune; ſo that he thinks "himſelf irreſiſtible, and that every wo-"man he ſees has a deſign upon his "heart. He's a great favourite here; "how he comes to be ſo I can't ima-"gine—it muſt be my total want of "taſte without doubt."

"For my part," replied Edelfrida, "I thought he was mad; for he talked "in the moſt ridiculous ſtile imaginable

"to

"to me, who, you know, am an entire "ſtranger to him."

"O Lord, child," exclaimed Miſs Dudley, "how ignorant you are; that's "quite the eaſe of a man of faſhion, a "character he wiſhes always to ſupport, "only he ſometimes unluckily overacts "his part a little."

"I beg his pardon," ſaid Edelfrida, "I did not indeed underſtand that ſuch "manners were characteriſtic of the "man of faſhion; but I hope I ſhall "learn better in time."

"Now ſuppoſe," reſumed Miſs Dudley, "ſuppoſe you ſhould ſeriouſly "wound the heart of this Adonis, "Edelfrida, you could not think of re-"jecting the ſpendid alliance, ſhould "he lay his perſon and fortune at your "feet."

"I ſhould," replied Edelfrida, "drop "him a curtſy, and deſire him to pick "himſelf and his fortune up again, as "commodities far above any price I

"could

"could bid for them; but, however," added ſhe, laughing, "till he has laid "them ſo low, there is no occaſion for "me to make any reſolutions."

"That's wiſely ſaid, my dear," re- "plied Miſs Dudley, "ſo go to bed, "and dream yourſelf into conceit with "him; for you'll ſeldom look upon "his like again. Good night, my fair "couſin."

Edelfrida, when left alone, inſtead of beſtowing her thoughts on the Nabob, as Miſs Dudley had adviſed her, turned them upon a much more intereſting object, the abſent Henry, who, on every compariſon, roſe in her eſteem, not that with Mr. Martin ſhe condeſcended to compare him. With theſe ideas floating on her mind, ſhe cloſed her beauteous eyes in ſleep, and even there the image of her Henry accompanied her, and preſented a fair and friendly viſion to her.

The next morning, at breakfaſt, Lady Wilford

Wilford told her guests, that she projected a little dance in the course of the week, if she could muster a pleasant set wherewith to compose it of. "We ex-"pect Captain Mandeville to-morrow," continued she, looking significantly at her sister, who coloured at this intelligence; "and, with some of our neigh-"bours, I think we shall be able to "make up a tolerable set; we are four "couples, or shall be, in the house, you "know."

"Oh, by all means, let us have a "dance," cried Mr. Martin, "it is a "most exhilarating exercise, particu-"larly when the Graces join in it," looking full at Edelfrida, who was not a little entertained by his gross affectation.

After breakfast, the ladies adjourned into Lady Wilford's dressing room, who continued talking of and settling her plans for the intended ball. Then, turning to Edelfrida, said, "Pray, my dear, have

"have you brought any dreſs with you "proper for a ball?"

"I have brought," replied ſhe, "all "the dreſs I am in poſſeſſion of, which "is compoſed of black bombazeen, "and I fear by no means fit for the oc-"caſion, it being perfectly plain."

"No," ſaid her ladyſhip, "that will "not do indeed; it is an equipment "more ſuited to a funeral than a dance."

"Perhaps," returned Edelfrida, feel-ingly, "it is a dreſs more ſuitable to my "condition and circumſtances than any "other; ſince it continually keeps in "my mind what I ought never to for-"get, the great and irreparable loſs I "have ſuſtained."

O, pray don't indulge theſe melan-"choly fits, child," replied Lady Wil-ford, with a ſcornful ſmile; "I think "you have not yet felt the loſs you "complain of."

"I ſhould ſuppoſe not indeed," cried Miſs Wilford, with a toſs of her head; "but

"but ſome people like to affect the pen-
"ſive."

Edelfrida felt this contempt and ill nature very ſeverely, but made no anſwer to it. She could not, however, reſtrain her tears; therefore walked to the window to conceal them, while the generous gentle Maria followed her, with eyes of kind commiſeration, ſaying, "Dear ſiſter, conſider"—"Ridiculous!" replied her ladyſhip; "what did I ſay "to cauſe all this diſtreſs."

"From experience," ſaid Edelfrida, turning round, and collecting herſelf, "Lady Wilford can form no idea of "my feelings; and moſt ſincerely I "wiſh ſhe never may be able to judge "of them, by the loſs of any one of "thoſe friends, who are deſervedly dear "to her." Then caſting a look of cool diſdain on Miſs Wilford, ſhe ſeated herſelf again, reſolved to bear up againſt the malice of fortune, which had placed her

her amongſt perſons ſhe could not eſteem.

Lady Wilford, perceiving that ſhe was not the tame animal ſhe expected to have found in a dependant couſin, with that meanneſs, which ever accompanies the words and actions of the baſely proud, ſhe ſoftened her frowning aſpect, and aſſured Edelfrida ſhe meant only to jeſt with her. Miſs Wilford, boiling with all thoſe dirty envious paſſions which reign in little ſordid minds, now ſhrunk into herſelf, waiting inſidiouſly for an hour more favourable to that ſpleen which rankled in her boſom againſt an object, to whom nature had been ſo much more laviſh, than to herſelf; for, with all her vanity, ſhe could not but feel that Edelfrida ſoared beyond her, in every grace of perſon, as much as every other obſerver muſt ſee ſhe did in every grace of ſoul.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE days which paſſed previous to the projected ball were marked with no material incident, ſave the arrival of Captain Mandeville.—Lady Wilford had, indeed, kept her temper tolerably, which, to thoſe who were well acquainted with her, might appear extraordinary; and, in order to chace from the mind of Edelfrida the early impreſſion ſhe had made to her own diſadvantage, ſhe preſented her with a new crape dreſs for the night of the dance, accompanying her preſent with many profeſſions of friendſhip, and many flattering encomiums on her beauty, which (judging by herſelf) ſhe was convinced muſt make her peace effectually.

Edelfrida found great reluctance in her mind to accept this preſent; for ſhe had conceived a diſlike to the giver, which

which ſhe endeavoured not to conquer. It has been obſerved, that ſhe reſented, with impenetrable contempt, inſults which others perhaps paſs lightly over; but as her affections were warm and fervent, ſo were her averſions. To refuſe this offering of peace was, however, to create a diſcord ſhe dreaded; therefore ſhe took it, not gratefully, but in ſome ſort of neceſſity.

Mr. Martin, who was by this time really as much enamoured of her as his nature was capable of, began to turn in his mind a ſcheme of making her his wife, never doubting that when he had gained his own conſent, her's would of courſe follow immediately, and joyfully.

The ladies were aware of the change Edelfrida had wrought in him, and Lady Wilford joined Miſs Wilford to forward the progreſs of his paſſion from this motive; the latter was paſſionately in love with Mr. Dudley; and, having a large fortune at her own diſpoſal, his fa-

mily encouraged the hope that it would be a match; all of them, except Maria, who knew, if there was any faith in man, it never could; for she alone had heard her brother vehemently declaim against all thoughts of such an union. But Miss Wilford, not suspecting his dislike to her, which his politeness and good nature induced him to conceal, thought that, if Edelfrida was once disposed of, there would be no longer any impediment to her marriage with Mr. Dudley. With this idea, then, she promoted Mr. Martin's growing attachment to her, not from any wish to see her happily settled above the evils of dependance.

Edelfrida mean time thought that if Mr. Martin chose to make himself ridiculous, she need not scruple to assist him; therefore, far from declining his conversation, she appeared to be pleased with it, in order to seek an opportunity of playing on his foibles, and exhibiting him to the party in colours truly

ludicrous,

ludicrous, ſo that his beſt friends could not always help joining in the laugh againſt him: but he, wrapt up in his own conſequence, never perceived from what ſource her attention to him proceeded; he was ſatisfied that her heart was his own.

In this ſituation of affairs, the ball evening arrived. Mr. Martin, with his uſual florid ſtile of addreſs, ſolicited the felicity of Edelfrida's fair hand for the firſt dances, hoping to be ſo favoured frequently in the courſe of the evening. Mr. Dudley engaged her for the next two; and thus provided for the early part of the evening, ſhe joined the party in the houſe, who now expected the viſitors every moment.

Since the arrival of Captain Mandeville, Edelfrida had obſerved that her friend Maria was in much better ſpirits than before; nor did it require much penetration to diſcover that he paid her that kind of attention which beſpeaks

more than an ordinary acquaintance. Lady Wilford's ſignificant looks too, together with Miſs Wilford's hints, gave her every reaſon to ſuſpect that he was a favoured lover of Maria's. How he ſtood in the eſtimation of Sir Edward and Lady Dudley ſhe as yet knew not, but was rather inclined to think not perfectly well, as his name had never been mentioned at Dudley Park, in her hearing.

About ſeven o'clock, the carriages began to move at Wilford Lodge; and, before eight, all the company were aſſembled, conſiſting of the neighbouring families.—About nine, the dancing began; and Mr. Martin triumphantly led his partner (unqueſtionably the handſomeſt woman preſent) into the ſet, where ſhe excited the general admiration of the men, and the envy of the ladies, at leaſt many of them, who conſidered themſelves belles of the firſt rate.

The ſet being finiſhed to Edelfrida's in-

finite

finite ſatisfaction, as ſhe began to find a *tete à tete* rather heavy and diſagreeable with Mr. Martin, ſhe reſigned her hand, with apparent pleaſure, to Mr. Dudley, who looked delighted at the cordiality with which ſhe received him.—They danced but little, which was to him a great gratification, as, by that means, he enjoyed her converſation unmoleſted, except that Miſs Wilford, caſting a jealous eye towards them, made ſeveral excuſes to ſpeak to either one or the other, in order to interrupt the ſubject which ſeemed to intereſt them, though it was in fact nothing of any moment.—Ere this engagement ended, Mr. Dudley took care to make another, which ſhould give him a title to ſit by Edelfrida at ſupper. He was then obliged to leave her to the fortunate man who had aſked her for the following dances.

In the midſt of this ſcene of gaiety, appearing to enter into it with full as much ſpirit as any perſon preſent, Edel-

frida, notwithſtanding, ſecretly ſighed for the abſence of the only man on earth who had really power to engage her heart or intereſt her feelings. A ſickly languor ſtole acroſs her vivacity, and ſhe was obliged to conſtrain her attention to the objects before her, or her abſence of mind might have been obſerved, and have led to enquiries ſhe had no inclination at that time to anſwer. Many gentlemen aſked her to dance, but ſhe found none ſo pleaſant as her couſin Mr Dudley, who ſeemed to ſtudy her humour, and inſenſibly fall into it, let it be what it would; a kind of flattery very ſoothing to a heart like hers.

Mr. Martin now approached her once more; and, with the air of a man who demands his right only, he took her hand, and hoped ſhe would dedicate the reſt of the evening to him, ſince he had had the patience ſo long to behold other

men

men in poſſeſſion of the happineſs he ſighed for.

"I am engaged, Sir," ſaid Edelfrida, "for every dance during the evening."

"Engaged!" repeated he, with a look of diſappointed vanity—"Is that "uſing me well, Ma'am? Did I not peti- "tion for the honour of being your "partner before any one elſe? and I "think my pretenſions are not inferior "to thoſe of any man in this room."

"I fancy, "Sir," replied ſhe, haugh- "tily, "that the pretenſions of every "gentleman in this room are equal, as "far as the queſtion in debate extends; "and I alſo fancy I am at liberty to ac- "cept for my partner any one of them "that may do me the favour to aſk "me."

"O! certainly, Ma'am," returned he, with a ſneer, "I do not preſume to "dictate to you, though perhaps the "time may come when it is poſſible "you may regret this coquetry, and

" once more attempt to regain the heart
" thus idly thrown away."

A ſmile of contempt ſat on the features of Edelfrida, as he uttered this ſpeech, which ſo enraged him, that he cried out:

" You may reſerve your mirth, Ma'am,
" for ſome other occaſion; you'll find,
" I believe, that men of fortune don't
" every day entertain thoughts of marrying inſignificant Miſſes without a
" ſhilling."

Mr. Dudley, who was hovering near, heard the laſt ſentence ſpoken, in a tone of ſuch warm reſentment, that he came up to Edelfrida to learn the meaning of it. To which ſhe replied:

" This gentleman thinks he proclaims a becoming ſpirit, by inſulting
" a woman, who never felt herſelf ſufficiently intereſted about him to wiſh
" either to offend or pleaſe him."

" I muſt beg, Sir," ſaid Mr. Dudley,
" that you will do me the favour to aſk

" this

"this lady's pardon: no man ſhall in-
"ſult her with impunity, be aſſured."

"Your interference, Mr. Dudley,
"was quite unneceſſary," replied Mr. Martin; "we could have ſettled our
"little diſpute without a third per-
"ſon."

"Come, come, Sir," cried Mr. Dudley, with a determined air, "aſk this
"lady's pardon for the inſult you have
"dared to offer her; or you and I muſt
"talk the matter over at another time
"and place. Don't affect to deceive your-
"ſelf into a belief that you ſhall ever
"be on ſuch terms with Edelfrida Dud-
"ley, as to make my interpoſition ei-
"ther unneceſſary or impertinent."

Edelfrida, now fully aware of the imprudence ſhe had been guilty of, by making her couſin a party in this affair, ſtole away, in order to conſult Maria what was to be done. She found her quietly ſeated in the next room, deep in converſation with Captain Mandeville;

when approaching them, pale and trembling, ſhe exclaimed, "Oh! my dear "Maria, what have I done! how you "will hate me for it! and how I hate "and deteſt myſelf."

"For Heaven's ſake, my dear," replied Miſs Dudley, all aſtoniſhment, "what is the matter! what has cauſed "this agitation?"

"O!" ſighed ſhe, "I have drawn "your brother into a quarrel with that "wretch—that horrid Martin; do go "and try to appeaſe them."

"I can't apprehend ſuch alarming "conſequences as you ſeem to do," ſaid Miſs Dudley; "but I will go inſtantly.——Mandeville," added ſhe, "take care of Edelfrida; ſhe looks "ready to drop down."

Away ſhe went, and Captain Mandeville made Edelfrida ſit down, and ſwallow ſome wine, endeavouring all the time to calm her fears, which, however, ſubſided not till Maria returned with her

her brother, who, flying to Edelfrida, aſſured her all was over, Mr. Martin had condeſcended to aſk his pardon, and alſo hers, and ſo ended the diſpute.

This little incident, however, confirmed Mr. Dudley's hopes; and, in the moſt empaſſioned tone and manner, he conjured her to compoſe herſelf; for that on her welfare depended his life and happineſs.

Edelfrida, ſtruck with his voice and his words, inſtantly ſaw the error into which he had fallen. It flaſhed at once upon her; and, with an embaraſſed air, ſhe replied to him, fearful of ſtill plunging him deeper into the evil ſhe could only deplore, to eſcape him, ſhe complained of a pain in her head, and wiſhed to retire to her apartment, for ſome time at leaſt, if not for the remainder of the night.—Maria offered to accompany her; and, juſt as they were quitting the room, Lady Wilford enter-

ed, with eyes flashing the fire of indignation.

"So, Ma'am," said she to Edelfrida, "you have given yourself pretty airs, "I find: you wanted, I suppose, to have "your fame celebrated by either the "death of my brother or Mr. Martin. "I beg in future, you'll recollect your- "self, and not interrupt the harmony of "a whole company, by your insolence "to any gentleman."

This attack so overpowered Edelfrida, that she threw herself into Miss Dudley's arms, and burst into a passion of tears. But it had a different effect upon Mr. Dudley, who, forgetting his prudent scheme, avowed his tenderness for Edelfrida, in direct terms:

"This is treatment," exclaimed he, turning to his sister, "which I will ne- "ver tamely witness; and if you, Lady "Wilford, think it consistent with the "laws of friendship and hospitality, it "is the last time Edelfrida shall, with

"my

"my conſent, enter your doors. I will
"protect her, at all hazards, from
"every indignity; and with pride will
"I proclaim to the world, and my own
"family, that ſhe alone is poſſeſſed of
"my affections, and ever ſhall poſſeſs
"them."

"Vaſtly well," returned her ladyſhip.
"Sir Edward and Lady Dudley will,
"no doubt, be exceeding rejoiced at
"the worthy and judicious choice you
"have made."

Saying this, ſhe left the room; and Edelfrida, no longer able to ſupport herſelf, was, in a great meaſure, carried to her own room; while Maria, weeping, followed.

Mr. Dudley would, himſelf, bear her up-ſtairs; and when there, reluctantly reſigned her to his ſiſter and her maid.

By degrees, the firſt violence of her emotion ſubſided; which when Miſs Dudley perceived, ſhe dimiſſed her ſervant,

vant, that they might be more at liberty to converſe on the diſtreſſing ſubject.

"My dear Edelfrida," ſaid her faithful friend, "ſuffer not the inſolence of "a man I know you deſpiſe, to agitate "your feelings to a degree injurious "to your health and happineſs; and "as to my ſiſter's unfriendly and in-"conſiderate behaviour, attribute it "ſolely to that uncontrolled warmth "of diſpoſition which ever has diſtin-"guiſhed her through life. She can-"not help it now; but I am con-"vinced, that to-morrow ſhe will be "ſorry for the part ſhe has taken to-"night. For my ſake, then, try to "forget and forgive it; and rely upon "my brother's affection for a ſecurity "againſt all ſuch inſults in future. "He loves not lightly, my charming "friend; and his heart, be aſſured, is "a very valuable one: to you he has "given it; and he will, I am con-"vinced, boldly aſſert your undoubted

"claim

"claim to it, and conquer any little
"oppoſition he may meet with from
"the views my mother has formed
"without his concurrence, and in
"which, had he not known you, he
"never would concur."

"Ah! Maria," replied Edelfrida,
"what you offer to me as conſolation
"under theſe mortifying circumſtances,
"greatly augments my diſtreſs. Your
"brother, you ſay, loves me; indeed
"he generouſly declared it himſelf;
"think then, my kind friend, how it
"muſt wound my feelings to tell him,
"I have no heart to diſpoſe of in re-
"turn for the excellent one he beſtows
"on me. I love another, even to a
"degree of enthuſiaſm which occupies
"my whole ſoul; and while I continue
"to be, the ſame animated ſentiment
"will make the largeſt part of me.

"I wiſh to Heaven I had made you
"acquainted with this ſecret ſooner.
"I might have truſted you; I felt I

"might,

"might, with safety; but an irresisti-
"ble impulse urged me to silence; by
"which means, I fear I have disturbed
"the peace of your brother's mind,
"not destroyed it, I fervently hope."

"I hope not," said Maria, with a deep sigh.

"You do not think me so light and
"worthless, my friend, as to trifle with
"the affections of an amiable man, I
"trust. Speak to me, Maria; your
"silence is a dagger to my heart."

Maria embraced her, and replied,
"Indeed I do not. But be not sur-
"prised, Edelfrida, if I grieve over the
"severe disappointment poor Edward
"is about to endure. I think my
"happiness is inseparable from his;
"I am sure it ought to be so, for he
"has ever been my kindest friend:
"The misfortune, then, which assails
"his tranquillity, must also injure mine.
"Besides which, I had cherished the

"hope

"hope of calling you my ſiſter; for I "already love you as ſuch."

"How conſolatory," exclaimed Edelfrida, "is the language of ſincere friend-"ſhip! Oh! Maria, never withdraw "from me your regard, I conjure you; "for next to my affection for my gene-"rous Henry, your kindneſs is my "greateſt bleſſing.

"When I loſt my father, Heaven, "in pity to my affliction, ſent me two "friends to ſuſtain me in this untried "journey of life, or how ſhould I have "ſurvived ſo ſevere a blow.

"Your mother, my dear Maria, "conſiders me as an intruder into her "family. Your father extends his "protection to me out of charity; he "loves me not as the child of his once-"beloved, and ever excellent brother. "Your ſiſter, and Miſs Wilford, re-"gard and treat me as an humble de-"pendant. But my ſoul is not formed

"to

"to endure the humiliating ſcorn. For
"your ſake, however, and the proſpect
"of a ſpeedy relief, I ſhall bear it
"patiently while I ſtay amongſt you.
"When I am removed to a leſs exalted,
"but far, far happier ſituation, when I
"am protected by Henry Evelyne, I
"ſhall not feel their contempt. But
"your goodneſs, while I have life I
"ſhall never forget, whether my deſ-
"tiny ſhall conduct me to a palace or
"a cottage."

"You, my Edelfrida, will ſoon be
"happy, as you deſerve," ſaid Miſs Dudley tenderly; "and, whatever your
"condition may be, I ſhall remain your
conſtant friend, be aſſured.

"But Edward!—how ſhall we
"break to him tidings ſo full of deſ-
"pair?—You, yourſelf, muſt undertake
"to tell him his fate; from your mouth
"he muſt hear it; from any one elſe,
"he would diſcredit it."

"Well,"

"Well," replied Edelfrida, ſighing from the bottom of her heart, "well, "ſince he muſt know it, I owe him the "ſacrifice of my own feelings, and "will not ſhrink from the taſk you aſ- "ſign me, however painful I may, and "ſhall find it."

Miſs Dudley's maid now came up, to inform her miſtreſs that ſupper was on the table, and Captain Mandeville waiting to conduct her to the ſupper-room, in which the company were aſ-ſembling.

Edelfrida inſiſted on her going down, for that ſhe would go inſtantly to bed. Her own plea for not appearing again, was indiſpoſition.

Miſs Dudley then took leave of her for that night, and returned to the company.

Edelfrida undreſſed herſelf, and went to bed; but ſleep refuſed to viſit her eyes; ſo that ſhe ſpent the night in ruminating

ruminating over the disagreeable events which had happened to her in the course of a few hours, and in thinking of the distressing explanation which was soon to take place with Mr. Dudley.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT was very late next morning ere any perſon in the houſe was ſtirring; but Edelfrida, not being able to ſleep, got up as ſoon as it was light, reſolving to take the very firſt opportunity of ſpeaking to Mr. Dudley, having no doubt but that he would begin the ſubject the moment they were alone together.

With a beating heart, then, ſhe deſcended from her room, when ſhe thought the breakfaſt-parlour would be ready to receive her.

She found it in order for the reception of the family, but empty. She ſeated herſelf by the fire; and as the time approached when ſhe might expect to be joined by ſome of the party, ſhe felt her ſpirits ſink, and her reſolution grow weaker and weaker.

She

She heard a ſtep move towards the door; and with difficulty ſhe kept her place.

While ſhe was conſidering whether to go or ſtay, Mr. Dudley entered the room.

She grew, alternately, hot and cold, red and pale. She trembled, and attempted to riſe; but the effort was too much, and ſhe fell back into her ſeat in a ſtate of agonizing diſtreſs.

He approached her; he took her hand. "Why this agitation, my be-"loved Edelfrida," ſaid he affectionately; "from me you have nothing "to expect but the moſt unalterable "eſteem, the moſt perfect admiration, "of not only your beautiful perſon, "but your ſtill more beautiful mind; —"you are the moſt lovely of women; "and my ſoul dotes upon you."

"O ſpare me," ſhe cried, almoſt breathleſs, "ſpare yourſelf and me; I "can endure no more."

She

She grew ſick as death; ſhe could not ſupport herſelf. But Mr. Dudley, all anxiety and apprehenſion, folded his arms round her to prevent her falling from her chair.

She burſt into tears.

"For Heaven's ſake, my Edelfrida, "ſpeak!" exclaimed he; "I am on "the rack."

Having eaſed the oppreſſion at her heart by weeping plentifully, ſhe recovered herſelf a little, and, diſengaging herſelf from his arms, prepared to unfold the ſtate of her affections to him, when, in the inſtant, Miſs Wilford came into the room.

She ſtarted on beholding Mr. Dudley's countenance, and Edelfrida's eyes red and ſwelled with crying. "I "fancy," ſaid ſhe haughtily, "that I "interrupt you."

Mr. Dudley walked to the window without anſwering.

Edelfrida coldly ſaid, "Not at all,

"Ma'am;"

"Ma'am;" and indeed ſhe felt truly glad to be relieved at that time, for her ſpirits were altogether unequal to the taſk impoſed on her.

Mr. Martin next made his appearance; which he had no ſooner done, than Mr. Dudley ſaid to him, pointing to Edelfrida, "This lady, Sir, is now "at leiſure to receive your apology."

Martin coloured, but wiſely reſolving not to endanger a perſon of ſuch value and importance as his own, in his own eſtimation, he advanced to Edelfrida, ſaying, "I am ſorry, Ma'am, if I "was underſtood to intend any offence "to you. I had hoped," added he, bowing affectedly, "that my devotion "was too well known for my words "or actions to admit of ſuch a con-"ſtruction."

Edelfrida, diſguſted even more by his meanneſs than his brutality, curtſied with an air of dignity, and replied, "The politeneſs due to every one in

"this

"this houſe, is all I expect or deſire to "meet with, Sir; and if I miſtook "your meaning, I beg your pardon."

"It is then," reſumed he with a complacent air, "a mutual exchange "of forgiveneſs; and now I hope we "ſhall be good friends again.

Mr. Dudley caſt on him a look which ſaid, "What an incorrigible puppy!"

Edelfrida ſlightly moved, and turned from him.

Miſs Wilford ſat ſilently ſwelling at this ſcene, viewing it with inward mortification; but at the ſame time affecting a conſequential appearance, which on all little occaſions ſhe was wont to put on.

Miſs Dudley and Captain Mandeville, with Sir James Wilford, now joined the party in the breakfaſt-parlour.

Lady Wilford ſeldom left her own room ſo early in the day.

No further notice was taken of what had paſſed; but every one, conſcious

of ſomething diſagreeable, as it were in agitation, felt conſtrained; and with difficulty, indifferent ſubjects were propoſed, but ſo ill ſupported, that they inſenſibly dropt again.

Breakfaſt was no ſooner over, than Miſs Wilford, impatient to communicate to her amiable ſiſter the events of the morning, left the room; and as it was bright, froſty weather, the reſt agreed to take a walk.

The ladies ſent for their cloaks; and Mr. Dudley, without heſitation, taking Edelfrida's arm under his, Captain Mandeville of courſe being Miſs Dudley's eſcort, Martin was compelled to make Sir James his companion, which mortified him not a little; and he was alſo obliged to keep his diſtance too, for Mr. Dudley gave him a look, if he drew too near, which he did not chuſe to miſunderſtand.

When they were got a little way from the houſe, and ſufficiently detached

tached from the party, Mr. Dudley ſaid, "Now then, my Edelfrida, relieve me, "I intreat you, from the cruel ſuſpenſe "I have endured for a time which ap- "peared an age, and tell me whether I "am ſo happy as to poſſeſs that por- "tion of your affection and eſteem "which I find neceſſary to ſatisfy the "demands of a paſſion not more ardent "than pure, not more warm than it will "be laſting."

The tumult of Edelfrida's mind in- creaſed as Mr. Dudley pauſed for her reply.

"Be aſſured," ſaid ſhe in a low and tremulous voice, "that you poſſeſs my "higheſt eſteem, my friendſhip in no "common degree; but ——"

"But what, my Edelfrida!" ex- claimed he, with a look of the moſt fearful impatience. "Oh! blaſt not "every hope; I dread, yet long to "hear the concluſion of that terrible "beginning."

"If," ſaid Edelfrida, "I have un-
"fortunately trifled with your affec-
"tions, I call Heaven to witneſs, that
"the error was involuntary:—As a
"brother I regarded you; and as ſuch,
"incautiouſly, I fear I have encou-
"raged your generous partiality, by
"accepting, with too much apparent
"pleaſure, the kind attention you have
"uniformly beſtowed on me. Had I
"ſeen it in its preſent light, I would,
"without ſcruple, have made you the
"confidant of an attachment which
"death only, on my part, can diſſolve.
"—Ere I was ſo happy as to rank Mr.
"Dudley amongſt the number of my
"friends, my heart had received an in-
"delible impreſſion."

Covered with confuſion, and her eyes fixed on the ground, Edelfrida uttered this confeſſion.

Mr. Dudley was dumb for above a minute; then making an effort to ſpeak, he replied—"without cauſe to cenſure

"either

" either myſelf or you, my too-lovely
" friend, I obeyed the dictates of my
" nature in adoring you. That another
" ſaw and loved you firſt, is my mis-
" fortune;—a misfortune which may,
" which will corrode my peace, as it
" deſtroys that phantom of happineſs
" I had fondly in imagination raiſed;
"—but, Edelfrida, it ſhall not make
" me ungrateful for your friendſhip
" and eſteem; thoſe, at leaſt, I will ſtill
" poſſeſs, and, if poſſible, render myſelf
" worthy of them.—Say; is there any
" thing within the circle of my power
" which can forward your felicity, even
" with my rival? and behold me ready
" to undertake it.

Tears choaked her voice; but as ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe thanked him, with a grace and animation peculiar to herſelf, for this exalted proof of his diſintereſted regard; but aſſured him, ſhe could by no means exact from him, even if her future happineſs required it,

what might ſtill more injure his feelings.——

"Well then, Edelfrida," ſaid he, in a tone of voice which proclaimed the ſtruggle he maintained with himſelf, "Since you will not allow me to interfere,—here, in pity to my ſevere diſappointment, here let the ſubject drop; only remember, that if ever you ſtand in need of the interpoſition of a friend, I will be that friend.—In the mean time, I believe," added he, with a deep ſigh, "it will be prudent for me to change the ſcene:—what man can bear to ſee a beautiful proſpect of a country before him he is never to reach, a country in which he vainly intended to take up his future abode, but to which his adverſe fate forbids him ever to approach? how can he endure to gaze for ever, at a diſtance, on the paradiſe, from which he is excluded?—I will go, then, and ſeek to regain my loſt

"tran-

"tranquillity, leaving my Edelfrida, I "fervently hope, on the point of rea-"lizing the happineſs her virtues ren-"der her worthy of."——

Edelfrida could only anſwer by her tears;—and they ſoon after ſilently returned to the houſe, where Maria and ſhe retired, the one to relate, the other to liſten to what had paſſed.

Miſs Dudley embraced Edelfrida, and ſaid, while the drops of ſorrow and admiration at once filled her eyes, "Be ſtill my ſiſter and friend; and "may our dear Edward find his loſt "tranquillity very, very ſoon; for "his heart is formed of too noble ma-"terials to be the prey of an unhappy, "unſucceſsful paſſion.

Edelfrida returned the embrace with all the warmth of gratitude; and friendſhip and ſincerity joined in the wiſh, that Mr. Dudley might be happy.

They then ſeparated to dreſs for dinner, at which they met Lady Wilford,

who ſhewed, by the coldneſs of her manner to Edelfrida, that ſhe had by no means forgotten or forgiven the laſt night's adventure; Miſs Wilford, brimfull of fancied importance, caſt a ſcornful look on her likewiſe; and every one ſeemed ſilently to wonder at Mr. Dudley's evident dejection, except the few who were in the ſecret.

The ſame reſerve on the part of Lady and Miſs Wilford to Edelfrida continued the whole day; in the evening of which, Mr. Dudley aſked "If any body had any commands to Dudley-park, for that he ſhould be there the next day."

Except his ſiſter Maria, and Edelfrida, they all ſtared with aſtoniſhment at him; but he made no effort to remove it, only repeated gravely, that he ſhould go on the morrow.

"It's very extraordinary," exclaimed Lady Wilford; "I dont underſtand it."

"There is nothing further to be

"under-

"underſtood," replied he.—"I am "maſter of my own time and actions, "and to-morrow I ſhall leave Wilford-"lodge; what is there extraordinary "in that?"

"I can eaſily gueſs to whom we are "indebted," ſaid her ladyſhip, caſting a look of reſentment on Edelfrida, "for the loſs of your company, and "the ſudden change in your ſenti-"ments.—'Tis a moſt amiable office, "to interrupt family harmony."

"Caroline," replied Mr. Dudley, ſternly, "attribute the fault to your-"ſelf, and your aſſociates, if harmony "is interrupted, and endeavour to curb "that unhappy temper of yours, which "is the deſtruction of your own, and "the peace of all your family and "friends;—neither entertain nor en-"courage in others an abſurd chi-"merical idea, which will never be "realized;—nor ſuffer your unworthy "and unjuſt reſentment to fall where

" your warmeſt eſteem and higheſt ad-
" miration ought to be offered."

This grave rebuke ſilenced her; but by no means removed the prejudice ſhe had conceived againſt Edelfrida. Mr. Dudley's determined manner, however, put a ſtop to any further converſation on the ſubject for this time; and the card-table being their only reſource againſt the chagrin which had ſeized the minds of moſt of them, it was called for, and thoſe that choſe it ſat down.—Mr. Dudley was one, for he could not venture to truſt himſelf in converſation with Edelfrida, who never played.

At bed time they all ſeparated, with no very pleaſant ſenſations;—but as Edelfrida had removed a weight from her mind, by the explanation with her amiable couſin, and was completely worn out with fatigue and vexation of ſpirit, ſhe ſoon fell aſleep, and aroſe the next morning to bid a long adieu to her

her too partial friend, whoſe carriage was ordered.—

Immediately after breakfaſt, when it came to the door, and his ſervant informed him all things were ready, he got up, took a cold leave of all except Miſs Dudley and Captain Mandeville, then approached Edelfrida, and, without ſpeaking, preſſed her hand to his lips, bowed, and haſtily left the room. —No one ſpoke; and the carriage drove off.

Lady Wilford walked away, and ſoon after Maria, Mandeville, and Edelfrida were left alone.—They then, as uſual, prepared to take their morning's walk.

After this time Lady Wilford inſenſibly treated Edelfrida with more civility;—and as ſhe was reſolved, let her behaviour be what it might ſhe would endure it for Maria's ſake, ſhe accommodated herſelf to their humours ſo well, that all was once more quiet.

Mr. Martin continued to increaſe his attention to Edelfrida;—but ſhe preſerved towards him a diſtant politeneſs, neither to offend nor encourage.

In this courſe things proceeded, when a letter arrived from Dudley-park, containing Sir Edward and Lady Dudley's permiſſion to their daughter to remain at Wilford-lodge till the time of going to London.—No notice was taken in it of any reaſon for this plan.

Edelfrida now having overcome the little petty vexations which ſprang from the malice and envy of others, and from her own concern on Mr. Dudley's account, who, ſhe hoped, would ſoon regain his peace of mind, was purſued with the dread of a greater evil than any ſhe had yet experienced—the loſs of Mr. Henry Evelyne's affection and remembrance, for not a line had ſhe received from him ſince her reſidence at Wilford-lodge, though in daily expecta-

tion

tion of an anſwer to her laſt letter, which was written juſt before ſhe left Dudley-park.

In the boſom of her friend Maria ſhe lodged this ſevere grief, and viewed every letter which ſhe ſaw others peruſe with envious eyes.—Her pride, however, would not ſuffer her to write again without firſt hearing from him, ſo that the time of remaining in the country elapſed, and ſhe continued in a ſtate of agonizing ſuſpenſe.—The colour forſook her cheeks; the luſtre fled from her eyes;—a change the amiable ſiſters ſecretly enjoyed.

At the appointed time, the whole family ſet out for town.

Maria and Edelfrida travelled together, and took up their abode in St. James's-ſquare, where they found Sir Edward and Lady Dudley alone. Mr. Dudley was gone abroad.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN the courſe of their journey from Wilford Lodge to London, Miſs Dudley, who purpoſely ſent her maid with Lady Wilford's domeſtic, made Edelfrida acquainted with the ſtate of her heart, with reſpect to Captain Mandeville.

"I am convinced," ſaid ſhe, "that "our mutual attachment has not eſcap- "ed your obſervation. I wiſh I could "tell you that it was ever likely to "meet with the approbation of my fa- "ther and mother; but of that I dare "not flatter myſelf."

"How comes it, then," replied Edelfrida, "my dear Maria, that your ſiſter "is ſo indulgent. I ſhould have ima- "gined the ſame motives which influ- "ence Sir Edward and Lady Dudley, "in ſuch caſes, would alſo influence

Lady

"Lady Wilford, who does not appear
"to me to have much conſideration for
"other peoples feelings."

"I am wholly at a loſs to gueſs my
"ſiſter's motive," returned Miſs Dud-
ley; "for, except in this one inſtance,
"I never found her eager to promote
"my happineſs. I can only account
"for it, by ſuppoſing that Mandeville
"is a favourite with her; and ſhe in-
"vites him to Wilford Lodge rather to
"gratify herſelf than me. I muſt own
"this conſtruction ſeems ill natured
"and ungrateful; but I have too much
"reaſon for putting it upon her con-
"duct in this affair. She certainly be-
"lieves that Mandeville and I enter-
"tain a great regard for each other,
"though I never made her my con-
"fident, from a fear of being betrayed,
"as I know her incapable of keeping a
"ſecret; and I have now my doubts
"whether ſhe is not laying a ſnare for
"me."

"Is

"Is it poſſible," cried Edelfrida, "that you can ſuſpect her of acting ſo "vile a part."

"I am very ſorry to ſay, even to you, replied Miſs Dudley, "that I do ſuſpect "her; that I fear ſhe would not ſcruple "it, if I give her the ſlighteſt cauſe of "offence. I have frequently experi- "enced the ungenerous effects of her "reſentment and paſſion.—I feel," added Miſs Dudley, "that I have done "very wrong to encourage, either in "Mandeville or myſelf, ſentiments "which may create much miſery to "both, ſince I fear my mother will ne- "ver conſent to our union. I ought "to have reflected on this before I was "ſo deeply engaged. It is now too "late; my affections are fixed; and "Mandeville relies on my ſolemn pro- "miſe to marry him, or never to marry "at all. 'Tis very painful to me to "maintain a clandeſtine correſpondence "with him; but I muſt either do that,

"or

" or give him up entirely, which I have " not reſolution to do."

" It is indeed very unfortunate," ſaid Edelfrida, " that you are compelled to " act ſo contrary to what I am certain " you wiſh; but ſure my uncle would " not oppoſe your happineſs—he could " not be ſo cruel."

Miſs Dudley ſhook her head in ſilence. " Well, my dear Maria," reſumed Edelfrida, " ſince that is the caſe, " I ſhall feel no repugnance in offering " you every aſſiſtance in my power; if " you ſtand in need of a friend, you may " command me. I am ſure you will " not aſk me to engage in any thing " unworthy.—Captain Mandeville is a " man of honour and character, in eve- " ry reſpect, I believe; and, if your " family would ſacrifice your happineſs, " merely becauſe he is not poſſeſſed of " a large fortune, I think you are per- " fectly right in determining for your- " ſelf."

I re-

"I receive your kind offer," ſaid Miſs Dudley, "my dear Edelfrida, with "thanks and gratitude; but I ſhould "be ſorry to involve you in any diſtreſs "on my account. I am very irreſolute. "I cannot bring myſelf to ſet my fami- "ly at defiance, by marrying without "their conſent; neither can I bear the "idea of ſacrificing my affection for an "amiable man, in compliance to their "prejudice in favour of rank and for- "tune. Mandeville is a gentleman, "and his fortune is ſufficient to gratify "my ambition, though it is ſmall."

"I am by no means qualified to ad- "viſe you," replied Edelfrida; "but "I repeat, if I can be of any ſervice to "you, you ſhall always find me ready "to prove my friendſhip."

"If I ſhould want your aſſiſtance," returned Miſs Dudley, "I will claim your "promiſe; for I know I may rely on "your truth and ſecrecy."

"Indeed, you may," ſaid Edelfrida; "whatever

" whatever elſe I may be deficient in,
" truſt me, I will be faithful."

" I hope," reſumed Miſs Dudley,
" that I ſhall have no occaſion to tax
" your friendſhip, ſo high as to make
" you a party in any of my ſchemes;
" whatever they may hereafter be, at
" preſent I have formed none. I ſhall
" content myſelf with ſeeing Mandeville
" occaſionally in public, and at my ſiſ-
" ter's. He does not viſit at our houſe;
" and we can form no pretence for in-
" troducing him, particularly as my
" brother is now abſent from home."

" Of that I am the unfortunate cauſe,"
replied Edelfrida, ſighing. " You have,
" Maria, therefore a double claim to
" my aſſiſtance, if you want it."

" I am happy in having ſuch a friend,"
ſaid Miſs Dudley.

During the above converſation, Edel-
frida entered, with all her natural warmth
of heart, into her couſin's intereſt. She
conſidered the oppoſition her happineſs
was

was likely to meet with, from the unfeeling temper of Lady Dudley, as a ſufficient apology for acting according to the dictates of her own inclination; and ſhe reſolved, at all events, to aid and aſſiſt the friend ſhe loved, even at the hazard of offending her uncle, tho' ſhe was ſo greatly dependant on him. She judged in all things with a vivacity which frequently led her into difficulties; but yet thoſe difficulties failed to correct the error.

When they got to town, Sir Edward received his neice with more appearance of regard than he had ever yet ſhewed; but Lady Dudley was, if poſſible, more cold and reſerved than ever; and Edelfrida was rejoiced when the hour of retiring arrived, that ſhe might alone indulge her reflections on the extraordinary ſilence of Mr. Henry Evelyne.—She never ceaſed to revolve over and over every circumſtance of their acquaintance, every expreſſion which had

had fallen from him in the courſe of it. The ſtile of his letters which confirmed thoſe expreſſions, and every look, which, while they were together, ſpoke the truth and fervency of his attachment. From what then could his ſilence proceed! in all the anguiſh of diſappointment, ſhe endeavoured in vain to diſcover. She had written to him every minute particular of her ſituation, as he had deſired; and ſhe was convinced that there was nothing in any of her letters to diſpleaſe or diſguſt him. Wretched then, from this neglect, but of too proud a ſpirit to let it appear, ſhe determined now that ſhe was ſettled in the gay metropolis, to enter with avidity into the diſſipation it preſented to her, and loſe, if poſſible, the painful recollection of happier expectations.

When ſhe made her appearance the next morning at breakfaſt, Sir Edward, who was in the room, took her hand, and ſaid:

"You

"You have, it is true, deprived me "of the company of my ſon, Edelfrida; "but I forgive you, becauſe I am aſ- "ſured that you gave no encourage- "ment to his inconſiderate paſſion. Per- "haps, I ſhould have indulged him in "an attachment to the daughter of a "brother I tenderly loved, but Lady "Dudley would have been made unhap- "py by it. I therefore depend on your "continuing ſteady in refuſing to liſten "to his addreſſes, ſince they could not "be authoriſed by me, without deſtroy- "ing the peace of my family."

"You may depend on me, Sir," replied Edelfrida; "Mr. Dudley will, I "ſincerely hope, be able to make a "more worthy choice, one more agree- "able to the expectations of his family "than I can ever be. My friendſhip "and eſteem for him are not of a na- "ture to injure his better proſpects; "they are perfectly diſintereſted. I wiſh "but to preſerve a ſiſter's place in his "affections.

" affections. To that, I may preſume,
" neither Lady Dudley nor you, Sir,
" can have any objection."

" Certainly not," ſaid Sir Edward,
" and on theſe conditions you may rely
" on my conſidering you as my child.
" Edward, I hope, will recover his tran-
" quillity ere long; and I have no doubt
" but you will have an opportunity of
" ſecuring for yourſelf a proper and ho-
" nourable eſtabliſhment."

" Till you regard me as a burden,"
replied Edelfrida, " I ſhall give myſelf
" very little trouble about that. I ſhall
" take no pains to alter my preſent con-
" dition."

" I do not wiſh that you ſhould," ſaid
Sir Edward; " but, though I am in
" no haſte to diſpoſe of you, if an eli-
" gible connexion ſhould offer itſelf to
" you, I hope you would not for your
" own ſake neglect it."

" I believe, Sir," replied Edelfrida,
" my ideas on that ſubject are peculiar;

" and

" and I truſt that I ſhall be indulged in " them, ſo long as they do not inter- " fere with the views of your family."

" Though I may adviſe, Edelfrida," ſaid Sir Edward, " I ſhall never take " upon me to controul your choice, be " aſſured.

" Your advice, Sir," returned ſhe, " I ſhall always reſpect."

" It is my wiſh," added he, " that you " ſhould appear like my own daughter, " on all occaſions; and as I know your " little fortune is inadequate to the ex- " pences of your preſent ſituation, I " mean to make this addition to it year- " ly, ſo long as you continue under my " care."

He then preſented her with a bill of fifty pounds, and bade her depend on his affection to promote her welfare to the extent of his power.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISS DUDLEY not being preſent when her father made Edelfrida acquainted with his knowledge of Mr. Dudley's propoſals and attachment to her, or when he gave her the fifty pound note, was informed of what had paſſed, as ſoon as ſhe was left alone with her couſin. Edelfrida repeated what her uncle had ſaid to her, without any animadverſion; for ſhe would not pain the mind of her friend with expreſſing her thoughts and ſentiments on the ſubject. She only ſaid that ſhe was obliged to Sir Edward for his attention and generoſity, which would enable her to appear as his niece; but, in her heart, ſhe lamented the neceſſity ſhe was under of accepting his preſent. Her feelings would have been infinitely more gratified in refuſing it, than her vanity could

poſſibly be in the ornaments it was intended to procure. She was, however, compelled to ſuffer the obligation, or offend her uncle, which ſhe could not venture to do.

Miſs Dudley, who really entertained for her the warmeſt and moſt ſincere affection, felt every pain which was inflicted on the heart of Edelfrida; but, when that pain was inflicted by her father or mother, ſhe could do little more than ſecretly ſigh. She ſpared, however, no opportunity of convincing her that, whatever Lady Dudley's ſentiments towards her might be, Sir Edward's were affectionate and kind, tho' he did not always think it prudent to expreſs them.

Edelfrida, who now for the firſt time in her life began to conſider the important article of dreſs, found that ſhe was in poſſeſſion of none of the neceſſary appendages, without which ſhe was by no means to make her appearance in public;

public; ſhe therefore requeſted that her friend Maria would take her to thoſe places where ſhe could be furniſhed in the moſt faſhionable and elegant ſtile with whatever was proper for her to wear, while ſhe continued in her deep mourning; for ſhe determined, ſince ſhe could not be happy in her own way, to bury paſt tranſactions in the vortex of pleaſure, and affect at leaſt the faſhionable indifference, that he who had cruelly deſerted her, and unjuſtly planted a thorn in her boſom, might not triumph in her miſery.

Lady Dudley ſignifying her intention not to uſe the coach that morning, Miſs Dudley and Edelfrida were at liberty to purſue their deſign of viſiting the milliners, and devoting their time to the equipment of their perſons for the evening, when they were to go with Lady Wilford to the opera.

At the milliner's, they met her ladyſhip and Miſs Wilford, who were try-

ing on every cap in the room, diſſatisfied that they were all ſo unbecoming. Edelfrida inſtantly fixed on one which Miſs Wilford had rejected as horrid; and putting it careleſsly on her head, undreſſed as it was, ſhe immediately deſired to have a mourning one made by it.

"Bleſs me, Edelfrida!" exclaimed Lady Wilford, "I wonder you chuſe "that fright; here's one that would "ſuit your ſtile of face much better," preſenting one to her which ſhe held in her hand, over-loaded with ill choſen but ſhewy ornaments, inelegant and vulgar.

Edelfrida, ſmiling, returned it to its place, ſaying, ſhe preferred the ſimplicity of the other.

Miſs Wilford, with a ſcornful toſs of her head, replied, "Beauties are fond "of affecting ſingularity; and I ſup-"poſe, Ma'am, you intend to convince "us that what you wear, though ugly "in itſelf, muſt look well."

"I de-

"I deteſt that affectation," ſaid Lady Wilford, in a commanding tone of voice, in which ſhe was wont frequently to expreſs herſelf.

"I ſee no affectation," replied Miſs Dudley, "in differing from another per-
"ſon in a mere matter of fancy.

"If it is ſo very reprehenſible," added Edelfrida, "I fear I ſhall often in-
"cur the cenſure; for I believe my
"taſte is very unlike other peoples, and
"I don't feel inclined to ſacrifice it."

"You need not tell us that," ſaid Miſs Wilford, contemptuouſly.

Edelfrida, tired of this wrangling ſtile of converſation, took no notice of the laſt ſpeech, by which means it dropped, and each party proceeded to make choice of the different articles they came to purchaſe.

Lady Wilford ſoon after ordered her coach to be drawn up; and wiſhing her ſiſter and Edelfrida good morning, in her uſual ungracious manner, ſhe de-

parted, with her amiable companion, calling out, as ſhe went down ſtairs, "Maria, we ſhall ſee you this evening; "and I beg you will come in time. I "can't bear to be kept waiting—it is "intolerable."

When they were gone, Miſs Dudley and Edelfrida finiſhed their buſineſs, and then ordered the carriage to ſome ſhops;—croſſing Piccadilly, they encountered Captain Mandeville, who got into the coach, and attended them to the different places they ſtopped at.

Edelfrida, who rejoiced in her friend's happineſs, was well pleaſed Maria had this opportunity of converſing with Mandeville, ſince only by chance ſhe was now to meet with him; yet ſhe could not help ſighing at the recollection of that felicity ſhe had once herſelf enjoyed, but which was to return no more.

"I think," ſaid Mandeville, "the "air of London has already faded the

"roſes

" roſes on my fair couſin's cheek. You
" know, Edelfrida, I am privileged to
" call you couſin."

" If Maria admits your claim," replied ſhe, with a ſmile, " I ſhall not " diſpute it.—But, I proteſt," added ſhe, " I have not heard one civil thing " ſince I came to town, and I have " been here, let me ſee how many hours. " Lady Wilford and Miſs Wilford have " actually ſcolded me for affectation, " and you tell me I am become a fright. " I hope I ſhall ſoon meet with ſome " kind creature, whoſe good nature will " put me in conceit with myſelf again; " for I really begin to think I am not " fit to ſhew myſelf abroad; and, unleſs " Mr. Martin's bewitching flattery can " ſooth me into my own good graces " once more, I muſt ſhut myſelf up."

" I ſwear," cried Mandeville, " if you " can endure Martin's fatiguing imper- " tinence, I ſhall ſcold you for affecta- " tion and vanity too. For Heaven's

"ſake, Edelfrida, don't ſuffer that fel-
"low to be your ſhadow. If you mean
"only to divert yourſelf with his folly,
"he will become more troubleſome than
"you are aware of; and I will not do
"your underſtanding, or the delicacy
"of your ſentiments, ſo much injuſtice
"as to imagine that you can think ſeri-
"ouſly of him."

"Indeed," replied ſhe, "I never in-
"tend to think ſeriouſly on any ſuch in-
"ſignificant ſubject, you may be aſſured;
"but I cannot promiſe, that if Mr. Mar-
"tin will force himſelf on my attention,
"I will not entertain myſelf at his ex-
"pence. From what do you ſuppoſe
"I am to derive my amuſement, except
"from the follies and abſurdities of ſuch
"creatures? You grave ſentimental
"people have your more refined enjoy-
"ments, exquiſite ſenſations, which ariſe
"from your charming ſenſibilities; but
"whom Nature has endowed with none
"of theſe delightful feelings, whoſe

"heart,

" heart, like adamant, is incapable of " impreſſion, and who ſhall never taſte

" That feaſt of reaſon,
" And that flow of ſoul,"

" which baniſhes all trifling gratifica- " tions from the mind. What I am to " do, poor thoughtleſs mortal as I am, " but indulge thoſe ſilly propenſities " which conſtitute my ſole pleaſure.—If " I am not allowed to laugh away care," continued ſhe, with a more ſerious countenance, " what will become of me?" The faithleſs Henry, at that inſtant, preſented himſelf to her imagination, and a tear, ſhe could not for her life reſtrain, trembled in her eye. She haſtily chaced it away, but not before it had been perceived.

" That adamantine heart of yours, " Edelfrida," ſaid Mandeville, " will " pay dearly one day for all this trifling. " I warn you as a friend to beware of " it; for, cold and unfeeling as I ſee it

"is, 'tis poſſible ſome random dart may "yet pierce it, and deeply too."

"No, no, my good friend," replied ſhe, reſuming an air of gaiety, "to all "random darts it is at leaſt invulner-"able, I truſt."

"Don't be too confident," ſaid he; "and the next time you wiſh to per-"ſuade us into a belief of your being "the poor, thoughtleſs, ſenſeleſs crea-"ture you repreſent yourſelf, don't let "certain ſymptoms betray you, which "make us ſuſpect that you are acting a "part—Come now for once be honeſt, "and confeſs that you have not told us "a word of truth."

"You're very modeſt, truly," return-ed ſhe, laughing, "to expect I ſhould "place myſelf in the amiable light ſuch "a confeſſion would hold me forth in. "No, you'll find ere long that I am juſt "the giddy creature I paint myſelf."

When the two ladies had finiſhed their buſineſs at the ſeveral ſhops they viſited,

viſited, Mandeville took leave of them, and they returned home.—They found Lady Dudley alone in her dreſſing room, who began finding fault with their long abſence, with her uſual aſperity.

" My couſin," replied Miſs Dudley, " had ſome-purchaſes to make, which " detained us longer than we propoſed, " and the time inſenſibly wears away, " while moving from one place to ano- " ther."

" I ſhould not imagine your couſin's " purſe was of that inexhauſtible kind," replied her ladyſhip, " which is neceſ- " ſary to ſupply the wants of a fine " lady: I would therefore adviſe Miſs " Edelfrida to aſſume a character better " adapted to her real expectations; for " I fancy ſhe will not find many ſuch " romantic ſimpletons as your brother, " though perhaps ſhe may expect it; " nay, indeed," added ſhe, with a ſmile of contempt, " I ſhould not ſay per- " haps, 'tis plain ſhe has raiſed her views

" to a more exalted point; for there is
" but little reaſon to ſuppoſe that Ed-
" ward would have had the good for-
" tune to be rejected, had not that been
" the caſe; nor am I quite ſo credulous
" as your father in this affair. I am
" well aware, Ma'am," turning full up-
on the greatly mortified Edelfrida, " that
" if you don't ſucceed in making a more
" important conqueſt, Mr. Dudley may
" yet have the honour of your hand, if
" he is ſo abject to accept it: But,
" let me tell you, that well as I love my
" ſon, on whom the hopes of my fami-
" ly reſt, I would rather behold him
" dead, than conſent to his union with
" the daughter of a man who was my
" averſion—a man who would have in-
" jured me in his brother's affection.
" Don't imagine I can ever forget that,
" though I conſented to receive you into
" my houſe. I hope it won't prove that
" I am nouriſhing a viper."

Indignation prevented Edelfrida's

yielding

yielding to the indulgence of tears; ſhe ſat ſtruggling with her feelings, while Lady Dudley thus gave vent to her ſpleen and ill nature. Maria, who durſt not ſpeak, in vain endeavoured to reſtrain her tears.—When Edelfrida could collect herſelf ſufficiently to reply, ſhe ſaid, as calmly as ſhe could:

"I will not attempt to remove the "rooted prejudice your ladyſhip has "conceived againſt me; neither is it "neceſſary that I ſhould explain what "thoſe expectations are which induced "me to decline Mr. Dudley's generous "affection, to one ſo little intereſted "in my welfare; only give me leave to "aſſure you, Ma'am, that the ſame rea-"ſons which influenced me then, will "ever continue to operate on my actions "through life. However wretched or "imprudent I may be, I truſt, I ſhall "never be deliberately vile or unwor-"thy; but if your ladyſhip ſuſpects "me of repaying kindneſs with ingra-

"titude,

" titude, the little I have yet experi-
" enced, under yours and my uncle's
" protection, I will here offer you my
" acknowledgments for, and withdraw
" myſelf from a ſituation which can
" afford me very little happineſs, if it
" interferes ſo much with your ſatisfac-
" tion to ſee me one of your family, or
" if it is too great a tax to treat me as
" Sir Edward's niece."

" Your pride and inſolence, child," returned Lady Dudley, ſwelling with anger, " will never help you to my good
" opinion, I aſſure you: You muſt learn
" the humility fitting your dependant
" ſtation, or you'll feel all the mortifi-
" cation you deſerve."

" I do already feel it, in no ſmall de-
" gree," cried Edelfrida, no longer able to conceal her diſtreſs. " Would to Hea-
" ven the grave, which ſhelters my fa-
" ther, had alſo received his unhappy
" child!"

Here ſhe gave way to her tears and

the

the ſorrow of her heart, without control; but on the marble heart of Lady Dudley they fell as a grateful incenſe, which fed the malignant paſſions that inhabited it;—and, careleſsly turning towards the weeping Edelfrida, ſhe ſaid:

"You had better retire to your apart-
" ment, Ma'am, till your extreme ſenſi-
" bility will permit you to compoſe
" yourſelf."

Edelfrida roſe in ſilence to leave the room; Maria would have accompanied her, but her ladyſhip angrily exclaimed, "Miſs Dudley, I want you."

When Edelfrida reached her room, the ſpirit which had hitherto ſupported her entirely fled, and ſhe felt herſelf the moſt forlorn and miſerable of the human race. She threw herſelf into a chair, and haunted by all the images of deſpair, ſhe reſigned herſelf to a fate which ſhe now conſidered as inevitably wretched; and, in the anguiſh of her heart, ſhe reſolved no longer to ſtruggle againſt it.

Inſulted

Inſulted by thoſe who ſhould preſerve her from inſult—deſerted by the man who had vowed everlaſting love and conſtancy to her, there appeared nothing left for her either to hope or fear.

In this melancholy and dejected ſtate Maria found her; and her gentle affectionate nature truly ſympathized in the diſtreſs her mother had ſo unfeelingly created. She embraced Edelfrida, and ſhed tears of unavailing ſorrow over the cauſe of her unhappineſs; a cauſe it was neither in her power to remove nor much to alleviate.—Edelfrida was, however, ſoothed by her kindneſs, and repaid it by exerting herſelf, which her friend earneſtly intended her to do.

"The hairdreſſer is here," ſaid Miſs Dudley; "do then, my dear Edelfrida, "oblige me, by trying to forget what is "paſt, and prepare yourſelf to go to "the opera, as you promiſed."

"Oh! pray excuſe me, Maria," re- "plied Edelfrida; "do not aſk me to

"carry

"carry an aching heart into a ſcene of "gaiety and pleaſure. Some other time, "perhaps, but now I find it impoſ-"ſible."

"Nay, if you give way to ſorrow, "Edelfrida, you will make me miſer-"able too. If you won't go, I am re-"ſolved not to leave you to your own "melancholy reflections."

"You diſtreſs me; indeed, you do, "Maria," ſaid ſhe. "I beg you to go; "I wiſh to be alone; even your pre-"ſence is now irkſome to me, for my "mind is diſtracted by a variety of vexa-"tions; and, by the time you return, "I hope I ſhall have conquered them "in ſome degree."

"I will not preſs you to go," return-ed Miſs Dudley, "if it is ſo diſagree-"able to you; but you muſt ſuffer me "to ſtay at home with you.—I am "determined on that, however trouble-"ſome you may think me."

"If that is the caſe, then," cried Edelfrida,

Edelfrida, riſing from her ſeat, "I will "accompany you to the opera."

She then called to Miſs Dudley's maid, deſiring her to order the hair-dreſſer to come up. Maria, who aimed at rouſing her from the languor of ſpirits in which ſhe found her, did not oppoſe, but rather encouraged her going, though ſhe did it merely to oblige herſelf.—Edelfrida then, with a weight on her mind ſhe could not overcome, ſat down to have her head tortured into a faſhionable ſize and ſhape, which was ere long accompliſhed. The natural luxuriancy of her fine hair was for a time deſtroyed by the ſciſſars of the expert operator under whoſe hands ſhe patiently ſat, and its original hue and brightneſs were concealed by the powder with which it was loaded. With a grin of ſelf-applauſe, the hair-dreſſer ſurveyed his own works, when her head was complete, her cap put on, and he on the point of departing—attributing leſs to

the

the beauty of the face beneath, than to his own ſkill, the uncommon ſucceſs with which he had performed.

Edelfrida, when he was gone, beheld her own metamorphoſe in the glaſs, at firſt, with ſurprize and diſapprobation; but 'tis probable, that had ſhe been in her uſual ſprits, ſhe would ſoon have looked herſelf into conceit with what had ſo great an air of faſhion: but, at this moment, almoſt indifferent how ſhe appeared, ſhe careleſsly finiſhed her dreſs; and, though her countenance was leſs brilliant than common, ſhe never looked more intereſtingly lovely. At the hour of dinner, ſhe accompanied Maria into the dining parlour, where they found Sir Edward, and were immediately joined by Lady Dudley, ſo that no converſation paſſed. Her ladyſhip knew of the engagement to the opera, therefore no queſtions were aſked; but, at the appointed hour, the carriage conveyed Maria and Edelfrida to Lady

Wilford's,

Wilford's, from whence they were all to go together. By this time, Edelfrida had regained sufficient composure to conceal her dejection, in a great measure, though she by no means enjoyed that happy vivacity nature had blessed her with, on this her first appearance.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Miſs Dudley and Edelfrida got to Sir James Wilford's, they found the ladies ready dreſſed, and Mr. Martin one of the party.

Lady Wilford, and her amiable ſiſter, ſurveyed Edelfrida with envious eyes, though, even to each other, they expreſſed the moſt profound contempt for her.

Not ſo the enamoured nabob:—he gazed with admiration on her captivating form, and, leſs in love with Nature than faſhion, he approved of the alteration the latter had made in her appearance.—But the loſs of her accuſtomed cheerfulneſs did not eſcape him; and while Maria was talking to the other two ladies, he went up to her, took hold of her hand, and, with an air of affected

affected tenderneſs, ſaid, "You look "penſive, fair lady; yet, believe me, "there is no form or humour in which "I do not find you irreſiſtible; the "grave and the gay are equally becom-"ing to you."

"You'll make me vain," replied ſhe, with the utmoſt indifference;—"when "men of wit and diſcernment flatter, "what woman can withſtand it!"

Unconſcious of the ſatire concealed in this ſpeech, Martin received it as a tribute of Edelfrida's affection, and beſtowed on her a bow and ſmile of the moſt complacent kindneſs.

The carriages being ready, the four ladies went in Lady Wilford's coach; Sir James accompanied Mr. Martin in his chariot; and in this order they proceeded to the opera.

During the ride thither, a ſudden and accidental jolt of the carriage threw Edelfrida forward ſo as to diſcompoſe Miſs Wilford's head in a very ſmall

degree.

degree.—The former inſtantly begged her pardon for the involuntary offence; but the rancour of the other's diſpoſition would not ſuffer her to paſs over a cauſe ſo trifling in itſelf, and ſo entirely unintentional.—

"I am ſure," exclaimed Miſs Wilford, "I ſhall not now be a fit figure "to make my appearance at the opera: "—my head all pulled to pieces;— "whether by accident or deſign, is "eaſy enough to determine."

"What intereſt could I poſſibly "have," ſaid Edelfrida, provoked at her ill nature, "in deranging your "dreſs, Miſs Wilford; but you ſeem, "at all times, reſolved on putting the "worſt conſtruction on every thing I "do or ſay. I am wholly at a loſs to "gueſs the cauſe of this enmity. I "never wilfully offend you."

"You treat me, Ma'am," replied Miſs Wilford, "on all occaſions, with "a contempt very little becoming you,

"I think;

"I think; but it is of no conſequence, "I aſſure you;—I can learn to deſpiſe "thoſe who are influenced by your "opinion, as much as I do the affected "airs and inſolence of a beauty."

"The very few who are to be influ-"enced by my opinion, can indeed be "of no conſequence to Miſs Wilford," returned Edelfrida.—"You, Ma'am, "are poſſeſſed, at leaſt, of that golden "charm to which the world will ever "pay reſpect; and what the friends of "an inſignificant, like me, may think, "is not material."

"If every body thought themſelves "as inſignificant as they really are," replied Miſs Wilford, "I know ſome "that would be greatly improved by "the ſelf-knowledge."

"A very juſt obſervation," ſaid Edelfrida; "for once, we are of the ſame "opinion."

During this dialogue, Miſs Dudley was ſecretly lamenting the fierce ſpirits

ſhe

ſhe was connected with, while Lady Wilford inwardly enjoyed that vexation the conteſting parties muſt unavoidably feel; for in her heart, ſhe had as little regard for Miſs Wilford, as for Edelfrida; but as the one robbed her of leſs attention and admiration, as ſhe imagined, than the other, ſhe could better conceal her diſlike from the leaſt diſtinguiſhed.

They now entered the opera-houſe, which put a ſtop to all further altercation.

Martin took care to attach himſelf to Edelfrida, ſo that no one elſe could approach her; but about that ſhe was indifferent, as ſhe knew no perſon there from whom to expect any attention.

During the performance, ſhe was gratified as much as the langour of her ſpirits would allow her to feel pleaſure. —She was enthuſiaſtically fond of muſic; and though her mind was now occupied with ſenſations of the moſt

painful nature, ſhe could not reſiſt the ſoothing ſtrains which aſſailed her ear.

She was at this moment almoſt inſenſible to admiration, for perhaps the firſt time in her life;—ſo, that though ſhe heard the whiſpers of—"Who is "that beautiful girl?" repeated frequently around her, ſhe felt little exultation.——

She diſtinctly heard a lady, who ſat near them, addreſs Miſs Wilford with an enquiry of who ſhe was.—"What "an angelic creature!" added ſhe; "I never beheld ſuch an aſſemblage "of beauty in one perſon before."

"Do you think ſo?" replied Miſs Wilford, careleſsly, yet with a mortified air.—"You ſurpriſe me.—She's "very well; but I confeſs, I think "there are many handſomer women "preſent."

"You are very ſingular then," ſaid the lady, "I aſſure you:—all the men "I have ſpoken to to-night pronounce

"her

" her a perfect beauty, and declare,
" there is not any thing like her in
" town."

" There is no accounting for taſte,
" you know," returned Miſs Wilford;
" —but, I fancy, the lady in queſtion
" will think herſelf greatly indebted
" to a pretty face, if it will ſecure her
" an eſtabliſhment; to which you be-
" hold all her pretenſions.—She has
" no fortune; not a ſhilling, I believe,
" but what ſhe is obliged to Sir Ed-
" ward Dudley for, who, though he is
" her uncle, has no great reaſon to be
" fond of her.—Her father, the late
" Mr. Dudley, died a beggar;—and
" after having injured his brother, and
" Lady Dudley, very materially, he
" he left them a legacy of his daugh-
" ter, who inherits too much of his
" diſpoſition to conciliate their affec-
" tions.—They have, however, received
" her, out of pure compaſſion;—but
" I fancy ſhe wont be long an inmate

" in their family; they will find it " neceſſary to provide for her elſe- " where, if I am not miſtaken, ere " long."

" I can ſcarcely think it poſſible," replied the lady, fixing her eyes on Edelfrida, " that a countenance ſo ex- " preſſive of the moſt engaging quali- " ties, can conceal a diſpoſition leſs " captivating; there is ſomething very " prepoſſeſſing in the young lady's ap- " pearance. I am certain, if I were to " be much with her, I could not help " feeling an intereſt in her welfare."

Miſs Wilford, piqued that ſhe could not conquer this prepoſſeſſion, ſcorn- fully replied, " If you were much with " her, I fancy you would be of my " opinion,"

" I could not eaſily be brought to " think ill of one on whom Nature has " beſtowed the ſtamp of excellence," returned the lady; " and I ſhould be

" very

"very ſorry to diſcover that it was not "intrinſic."

Miſs Wilford, now weary of the converſation, turned to talk with her next neighbour; while the lady who had been ſo ſtruck with Edelfrida's appearance, engaged the attention of a gentleman who ſtood near her; and they both, from time to time, caſt a look of approbation on the evidently fair ſubject of their diſcourſe.

Edelfrida now found that Miſs Wilford's diſlike of her was not confined to thoſe haughty and ill natured expreſſions of it to herſelf, which made her preſence ſo very diſagreeable; but that ſhe had only to expect from her the moſt malignant report of her actions and ſituation, whenever an opportunity preſented itſelf for the purpoſe of defaming her.

Filled with theſe uneaſy reflections, and mortified to be ſo repreſented to one who, though a ſtranger, yet in-

clined to think favourably of her, ſhe could with difficulty endure Martin's fulſome and abſurd compliments; but as ſhe could not, for that time, diſengage herſelf from him, ſhe liſtened in ſilence to profeſſions of eſteem and admiration ſhe deſpiſed, and never intended to profit by, let her fate, in other reſpects, be what it might.

When the whole performance was at an end, Lady Wilford, who had not enjoyed herſelf much during the evening, not having met with much attention from the men of her acquaintance, determined to rob Edelfrida of her beau, by deſiring Martin would ſee her to her carriage.

He, though unwillingly, obeyed; and reluctantly quitting the object of his devotion, he attended her ladyſhip. Mandeville, who had joined Maria, of courſe took care of her. Miſs Wilford faſtened herſelf on a gentleman who ſtood near them, and could not in ci-

vility

vility decline taking care of her. Edel- was left to follow by herſelf, till Maria, looking back, ſaw her alone in the crowd, and ſtopped till ſhe came up, as it was impoſſible to return.

At that inſtant, the ſame gentleman who had talked ſo long to the lady Edelfrida had ſo charmed, preſented himſelf; and Mandeville ſaid to him, "Dormer, I'll do you the favor to put "this lady under your protection till "ſhe is ſafe in Lady Wilford's coach;" then taking Edelfrida's hand, he gave it to Mr. Dormer, who, bowing, ſaid "he ſhould be happy to undertake the "charge."

This point adjuſted, they proceeded ſlowly towards the door; but as there were many carriages before Lady Wilford's, they were a conſiderable time in arriving at it; and during this time, Edelfrida's guide and new acquaintance entered into converſation with her.——

"This is an agreeable part of every

" public amuſement in town," ſaid he, " which you are not yet familiarized " to, I preſume," alluding to the crowd, which encompaſſed and incommoded them.

" No familiarity," replied ſhe, " will, " I believe, reconcile me to it."

" O you're miſtaken," returned he; " in the courſe of a few weeks, you'll " think a crowd the pleaſanteſt thing " in the world."

" Really," replied Edelfrid."

" The faſhionable contagion has not " yet infected you, I perceive; but, " depend upon it, you wont eſcape. If " it was not a delightful thing to live " in a crowd, do you ſuppoſe the very " rational, ſenſible people who ſurround " you, would ſo conſtantly engage in " one?"

" No wonder," ſaid ſhe, " that I " have not yet diſcovered the charm, " for this is the firſt time of my ad-

" miſſion

" miſſion into this world of pleaſure " and faſhion."

" That I could have ſworn," replied he; " and the next time we meet, if you " are in the humour to acknowledge " any acquaintance with me, you'll con- " feſs that you have found out the " charm of being in a crowd. You have " once for all entered the vortex, and " you'll find your ſentiments change " every turn you make in the round of " diſſipation, or you are not compoſed " of the ſame materials as the reſt of " your ſex."

" My ſex," returned Edelfrida, " are " much indebted to you for your fa- " vourable opinion, I perceive."

" My opinion," ſaid he, ſighing, " is " founded on experience."

" Worſe and worſe," exclaimed ſhe. " Then there is no hope of removing the " prejudice."

" I ſhould not be ſorry you would " remove it," replied he; " but I al-

" ready

"ready ſee you will not; ſo I won't
"flatter you. Truth is a language you
"will ſo ſeldom hear, that I am re-
"ſolved wherever I ſee you, I at leaſt
"will recall it to your recollection."

"Pray do," cried ſhe, diverted by his oddity. "I would not wiſh to loſe
"my reſpect for it; and if I hear it but
"ſeldom, I ſhall I hope prize it very
"highly."

"That's doubtful," ſaid he; "it may
"ſound harſh to the ear poiſoned by
"flattery; and I ſee you have lent yours
"to one of thoſe buzzing inſects who
"ſwarm round beauty, like waſps who
"ſettle on the fineſt fruit and flowers,
"to ſteal from them their ſweetneſs and
"bloom."

"Who is it on whom you beſtow ſo
"honourable an appellation?" demanded Edelfrida.

"Can you be at a loſs?" replied he, looking full in her face.

Perhaps I can gueſs," ſaid ſhe; "but
"I know

" I know not that he deſerves to be treat-
" ed with ſo much ſeverity."

" If you think him worth your ac-
" ceptance, I take it for granted he is
" your own," replied he. " If you do
" not, remember he has a ſting, and
" diſcard him ere you feel the wound;
" the meaneſt reptiles are ſometimes the
" moſt dangerous, becauſe diſregarded
" and deſtitute of thoſe ſentiments
" which give birth to a noble reſent-
" ment."

" I preſume," ſaid Edelfrida, " you
" are one of thoſe eccentric but bene-
" volent mortals who mourn over the
" frailties of mankind, and delight to
" warn the unwary of the dangers which
" encompaſs them. If that is *your* pe-
" culiar office on earth, I beg that I
" may be enliſted in the number of
" thoſe you admoniſh, to avoid the evils
" which we are frequently told lie con-
" cealed beneath the flowery path, the
" gay and giddy conſtantly tread. I

" want

"want a Mentor to direct my devious "steps. Will you undertake, with a true "disinterested spirit, to perform that "part to me? I tell you honestly I have "nothing but my gratitude to repay "you with."

"I like your frankness," exclaimed he; "and, with equal sincerity, assure "you I seek for no reward in being "your monitor; for, much as your "beauty merits, my heart is adamant: "I can be your friend, but never your "lover."

"Then," said she, with vivacity, "you are just the person I wished to "to meet with. From henceforth we "will be friends; and when I am about "to forfeit that title, scruple not to re-"prove me with severity."

"Agreed," replied he. "The singu-"larity of our introduction, and first "knowledge of each other, pleases my "humour: Besides, I see you surround-"ed with enemies, which I dare believe

"you

" you do not yet deſerve; and I ſhould
" glory in diſappointing their malice.
" Envious women are to be dreaded;
" be upon your guard againſt them."

" I thank you," ſaid Edelfrida, " and
" hope to profit by your advice."

The coach now drawing up, put a ſtop to all further diſcourſe between Edelfrida and her new friend, who handed her into it, and then took his leave.

Nothing material paſſed during the ride; Miſs Dudley and Edelfrida were ſet down in St. James's Square, and the reſt of the party proceeded home. When the two friends got together alone, Edelfrida repeated to Maria all that had paſſed in converſation between Miſs Wilford and the lady, who was to her a ſtranger; to which Maria replied, that it only confirmed Miſs Wilford's envious character, which was too well known to injure any one.

" And you, my dear," added ſhe, " who are ſuperior to her in every point

" of

" of view, can never, I truſt, be hurt,
" even in the ſlighteſt degree, by her
" malice and ill nature—her motive
" ſpeaks for itſelf."

Edelfrida thanked her kind couſin for her partiality; then told her of the new friend ſhe had made in the gentleman to whom Mandeville had committed the care of her.

" I am not ſurpriſed," replied Maria, " at what you tell me: Dormer is, I " know, eſteemed a very ſingular cha- " racter; but from Mandeville, who is " his friend, I have often heard that he " is not more ſingular than worthy. I " believe he has been unfortunate in " an early attachment, which may ac- " count for what he ſaid to you. Of the " particulars I am not informed; but " what he profeſſes, that I imagine " there is little doubt of his perform- " ing; and for his choice of a friend, I " give him credit."

" How far he deſerves that credit," returned

returned Edelfrida, "is yet to be proved, "my dear Maria. I have but little "eſteem to loſe; of that little I ought "then to be particularly careful, and "not, like a thoughtleſs ſpendthrift, "laviſh with unfeeling levity the ſmall, "invaluable, treaſure which Fortune, "in the midſt of her ſeverity, has ſtill "left me."

"Fortune," ſaid Maria, affectionately, "only means, I truſt, to try your "conſtancy a little, then reſtore to you "the happineſs her early promiſe taught "you to expect."

Edelfrida ſhook her head, and replied: "I fear her intentions towards me are "not ſo lenient. How, indeed, can ſhe "recompence me for the loſs of that "friend on whom I had fixed my hopes "of happineſs.—You may juſtly think "me giddy and inconſiſtent; Maria, "ſometimes light and capricious too; "but, believe me, my heart bears no "part in the character I am too fre-

"quently

" quently tempted to aſſume to con-
" ceal its anguiſh. To excite pity in
" the generality of people, would de-
" grade me in my own opinion. I
" have nothing left, then, but to wear
" the maſk of gaiety, while grief is ſe-
" cretly conſuming all the powers of my
" mind. As long as my pride will ſuſ-
" tain me, I may appear to the world
" incapable of any deep impreſſions;
" and that is allI have now to wiſh. To
" cure the wound which rankles here,"
added ſhe, laying her hand on her heart,
" is impoſſible; to alleviate its pain,
" is the only thing I expect or hope
" for."

" Indulge not this melancholy hu-
" mour, my dear Edelfrida," replied
Maria. " Your ſituation I know is very
" far from being a pleaſant one. I la-
" ment that I have no power to render
" it otherwiſe; but, ſhould the time
" ever come when I may enjoy the li-
" berty of action, ſhould my kind ſtars

" ever

" ever unite me to Mandeville, you will
" find two friends moſt happy to offer
" you an aſylum, free from the wound-
" ing circumſtances which attend your
" preſent ſtate."

" You, Maria," ſaid Edelfrida, " are
" the only true friend I poſſeſs; and if
" you are ever in a condition to afford
" me a peaceful retreat from the many
" diſtreſſing things I now experience, I
" know you will do it, and I ſhall moſt
" grateful accept it."

After more converſation in the ſame ſtrain, the couſins retired to reſt, happy in each other, though ſubject to many morifying occurrences. Maria ſcarcely leſs than Edelfrida; for the tyranny of Lady Dudley's temper too frequently involved her daughter in the moſt acute vexations; and now the doubtful ſucceſs of her wiſhes reſpecting Mandeville kept her in a continual ſtate of anxiety, little ſhort of the painful certainty Edelfrida felt in the loſs

of Mr. Henry Evelyne's affection, tho' how she had been so luckless to lose it, she was totally ignorant of.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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